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HANDEL, DRYDEN, AND MILTON

HANDEL, DRYDEN, & MILTON.

BEING A SERIES OF

OBSERVATIONS

On the Poems of DRYDEN *and* MILTON,
As alter'd and adapted by Various Hands,
and set to Musick by MR. HANDEL.

To which are added,

AUTHENTICK TEXTS

of Several of MR. HANDEL'S *Oratorio's.*

By ROBERT MANSON MYERS



LONDON:
Publish'd by Bowes & Bowes in *Covent Garden*
MCMLVI
[*Price Thirty Shillings*]

First published in 1956 by Bowes & Bowes Publishers Limited
3 Henrietta Street, London W.C.2

Printed in Great Britain by
BENHAM AND COMPANY LIMITED, COLCHESTER

For

MARJORIE HOPE NICOLSON

PREFACE

IT IS AN unfortunate fact that the multitude of English-speaking people who rejoice in Handel's *Messiah* each year at Christmastide seldom trouble themselves to investigate the wealth of forgotten treasures buried among the composer's less familiar works. Apparently Fate has fixed on *Messiah* as the one composition by which George Frideric Handel is to be known to posterity, and his name is accordingly reverenced by thousands whose knowledge of his music is bound on the one hand by endless repetitions of the 'Dead March' from *Saul* and on the other by hackneyed adaptations of the 'Celebrated Largo' from *Xerxes*. Handelians worship an almost unknown god. Of Handel's thirty-two oratorios and forty-one Italian operas the musical masses seem content to listen year after year to the one unapproachable favourite, while portions of the composer's finest music—his brilliant operatic arias, his secular oratorios and cantatas, his vigorous *concerti grossi*—are shamefully neglected when not altogether lost in oblivion. A knowledge of *Messiah* is far from a knowledge of Handel. Incomparable as it is, *Messiah* is in no sense completely representative of Handel's art, for it fails to illustrate his inexhaustible variety and versatility, his fondness for the playful and the merry, his passionate devotion to the English countryside, and his almost Shakespearean power to delineate human emotion. As Edward FitzGerald observed, Handel 'was a good old Pagan at heart, and (till he had to yield to the fashionable Piety of England) stuck to Opera, and Cantatas, such as Acis and Galatea, Milton's Penseroso, Alexander's Feast, etc., where he could revel and plunge and frolic without being tied down to Orthodoxy. And these are (to my mind) his really great works. . . .'[1] Perhaps *Messiah* is on the whole the most universally appealing of Handel's oratorios, but *Alexander's Feast* and *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day* and *L'Allegro* and *Samson* contain inspirations to rank with the most distinguished

[1] Edward FitzGerald, *Letters & Literary Remains*, ed. William Aldis Wright (London, 1902), II, 169.

music he ever composed. It is to be hoped that concert-goers of the future will break the bonds of custom and patronize Handel's lesser known but equally meritorious compositions.

No student of eighteenth-century English literature can doubt Handel's impact upon the subject-matter of Augustan prose and verse. When one notes the frequency with which the 'Saxon giant' appears in eighteenth-century poems, novels, and letters, he cannot fail to observe Handel's dominant position among persons of taste and fashion in Georgian England. But despite the fact that during the past two centuries Handel has become something of a British institution, few scholars of the Georgian period are more than vaguely aware that the greatest composer England has produced was during his lifetime intimately associated with the work of poets as eminent as Milton, Dryden, Pope, Gay, and Congreve. To churchgoers who still delight in Handel's *Messiah* it may come as a surprise that the composer's favourite oratorio was *Samson* rather than *Messiah*, and that the text of *Samson*, however pedestrian it may seem in Newburgh Hamilton's final version, was 'Alter'd and adapted to the Stage from the SAMSON AGONISTES of *John Milton*,' with additional contributions from various of the Minor Poems. Handelians may be further surprised to discover that Charles Jennens, author of the text of Handel's charming *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato*, was during his period of composition obviously dependent upon Milton's well-known companion pieces. Few students, moreover, realize that two of Handel's most popular performances, *Alexander's Feast* and *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, were based upon the celebrated St. Cecilia odes of Dryden; that the text of *Acis and Galatea* was produced expressly for the composer by John Gay; that the text of *Haman and Mordecai* (later renamed *Esther*) was, in the words of the Earl of Egmont and others, 'writ by Pope'; and that the text of *Semele* was, according to the title-page, 'alter'd from the *Semele* of Mr. William Congreve.'

Through the texts of his English oratorios, then, Handel was linked with the dominant literary figures of the Age of Dryden and Pope. It is the purpose of this book first to give some notion of Handel's treatment of two of these figures—Dryden and Milton; secondly, to show how eighteenth-century English critics repeatedly

associated Handel with his distinguished predecessors; and thirdly, to present for the first time in one volume complete and authentic texts of the Handel compositions which were based on works of these two poets. If, therefore, we are at present seldom able to hear Handel's great secular works adequately performed, at least we can acquaint ourselves with something of their background, their history, and their influence.

ROBERT MANSON MYERS

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From thee new rage the British Genius caught,
New rapture wing'd the Poet's soaring thought:
  Charm'd with the noble wildness of thy lyre,
From his bright sphere astonish'd DRYDEN bends,
Owns thy bold song his loftiest flight transcends,
  And learns to glow with more exalted fire.
With all thy warm, energic fancy fraught,
The mighty soul of MILTON smiles to see
  Its vast conceptions realiz'd in thee:
The nine-fold harmony he sung was thine;
While all thy spirit marks his nervous line.

THOMAS MAURICE,
Ode Sacred to the Genius of Handel (1784)

CHAPTER ONE

Handel and Dryden

I

IN 1710 George Frideric Handel settled in London as a master of Italian opera. For forty-nine years—until his death in 1759—he drew his inspiration almost wholly from that great English audience which he laboured to please. But Italian opera never fully expressed Handel's nature; it provided no theme commensurate with the grandeur of his conceptions. In his operatic music he failed to touch the English pulse, for genuine Englishmen hungered and thirsted after *English* music set to *English* words and performed by *English* singers. London therefore learned to know the true Handel only when the German composer abandoned opera and commenced that series of gigantic choral works which spoke directly to the English middle class and ultimately placed him at the head of 'English' composers.[1]

Strangely enough, it was quite by chance that Handel turned to English oratorio at all. On February 23, 1732, Bernard Gates, Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal, honoured the composer's forty-seventh birthday with a private rendition of *Haman and Mordecai.* Handel had composed this charming English masque twelve years earlier at Canons, seat of the Duke of Chandos, but after its initial performance on August 29, 1720, he had shelved it as a *pièce d'occasion* which had served its day. Following its successful revival in 1732, however, London demanded a repetition of *Haman and Mordecai*, and on May 2 the masque was performed at the Haymarket in an expanded version entitled *Esther.* This first public performance

[1] 'An English audience should estimate his abilities, by English compositions; and in beauty of expression and strong sense, he had there the greatest advantage: for what drama can be compared among all his Italian music, to the Acis and Galatea of Gay, L'Allegro and Penseroso of Milton, Dryden's unrivalled Ode to St. Cecilia, and Handel's great master-piece, the Messiah?' (William Coxe, *Anecdotes of George Frederick Handel and John Christopher Smith* [London, 1799], p. 32).

of *Esther* marked the birth of English concert oratorio. Thereafter its enormous popularity inspired similar works, until in 1741 Handel determined to abandon Italian opera altogether for the new form.

It is peculiarly significant that this German-born, Italian-trained composer should have gained his greatest glory in London with musical settings of English texts. Handel's shift from Italian opera to English oratorio marked the crisis of his career. Soon after the initial success of *Esther* several of his friends came to recognize the strategic character of his new position. On December 5, 1732, his former patron, Aaron Hill, urged the composer to experiment once again with a libretto in English:

I cannot forbear to tell you the earnestness of my wishes, that, as you have made such considerable steps toward it, already, you would let us owe to your inimitable genius, the establishment of *musick*, upon a foundation of good poetry; where the excellence of the *sound* should be no longer dishonour'd, by the poorness of the *sense* it is chain'd to.

My meaning is, that you would be resolute enough, to deliver us from our *Italian bondage*; and demonstrate, that *English* is soft enough for Opera, when compos'd by poets, who know how to distinguish the *sweetness* of our tongue, from the *strength* of it, where the last is less necessary.

I am of opinion, that male and female voices may be found in this kingdom, capable of every thing, that is quite requisite; and, I am sure, a species of dramatic Opera might be invented, that, by reconciling reason and dignity, with musick and fine machinery, would charm the *ear*, and hold fast the *heart*, together.

Such an improvement must, at once, be lasting, and profitable, to a very great degree; and would, infallibly, attract an universal regard, and encouragement.[1]

Aaron Hill was not alone in his desire to establish music 'upon a foundation of good poetry.' Setting words to music was, of course, already a firmly established tradition, and throughout the eighteenth century prominent writers united to extol the merits of poetry wedded to song. As early as 1691 John Dryden expressed the theory held by most critics of the following century:

Musick and poetry have ever been acknowledgd Sisters, which walking hand in hand, support each other: As poetry is the harmony of words, so musick is that of notes: and as poetry is a rise above prose and oratory, so

[1] *The Works of the Late Aaron Hill, Esq.* (London, 1753), I, 115–116.

is Musick the exaltation of poetry. Both of them may excell apart, but sure they are most excellent when they are joind, because nothing is then wanting to either of their perfections: for thus they appeare, like wit & beauty in the same person.[1]

Some years later James Beattie, observing that 'the expression of music without poetry is vague and ambiguous,' spoke of the two as mutual interpreters:

Poetry is the most immediate and most accurate interpreter of Music. Without this auxiliary, a piece of the best music, heard for the first time, might be said to mean something, but we should not be able to say what. It might incline the heart to sensibility: but poetry, or language, would be necessary to improve that sensibility into a real emotion, by fixing the fancy upon some definite and affecting ideas. A fine instrumental symphony well performed, is like an oration delivered with propriety, but in an unknown tongue; it may affect us a little, but conveys no determinate feeling; . . . the singer, by taking up the same air, and applying words to it, immediately translates the oration into our own language; then all uncertainty vanishes, the fancy is filled with determinate ideas, and determinate emotions take possession of the heart.[2]

Several eighteenth-century critics joined the chorus to approve the union of poetry and music. 'All the world has felt that they may be combined,' wrote William Jackson, 'and receive so much additional effect, that we must oppose the slightest wish to dissolve an union productive of such exquisite pleasure.'[3] John ('Estimate') Brown was in thorough agreement: 'An effectual Union of these two powerful Arts,' he wrote, 'directed to their proper Ends, would be productive

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[1] John Dryden, Dedication to *The Vocal and Instrumental Musick of the Prophetesse.* Quoted by Roswell G. Ham, 'Dryden's Dedication for *The Music of the Prophetesse*, 1691,' *PMLA*, L (1935), 1070. 'No Critic,' wrote Dryden, 'can justly determine the Merit or Difficulty of writing a Poem for Music, till he has been frequently conversant with some skilful Musician, and acquired, by Experience, a Knowledge of what is most proper for Musical Expression' (*Artaxerxes: An English Opera* [London, 1763], Preface).

[2] James Beattie, *Essays on Poetry and Music, as They Affect the Mind* (Edinburgh, 1776), p. 161.

[3] William Jackson, *The Four Ages; Together with Essays on Various Subjects* (London, 1798), p. 360. Jackson was also author of *Thirty Letters on Various Subjects* (London, 1783). In 1767 he composed music for *Lycidas: A Musical Entertainment, the Words Altered from Milton.*

of the noblest Consequences.'[1] Abbé du Bos also praised music as a 'means, which men have invented, in order to add a new strength to poetry,' maintaining that 'music has a greater efficacy than simple declamation, by giving a greater force to such verses, as are fit for its uses.'[2] Vicesimus Knox insisted that 'Good poetry and good music, each of which is separately powerful, acquire by union an irresistible force over the human heart. . . . It is indeed to be wished, that the superior poets of the age would combine with the best composers of music, and do honour to themselves, and to the arts they love, in cementing so natural an union by a liberal communication of mutual assistance.'[3] Discussing music as 'a *powerful Ally* to Poetry,' James Harris gave perhaps the most thorough analysis of the relation between the two arts:

There are few to be found so insensible, I may even say so inhumane, as when GOOD POETRY IS JUSTLY SET TO MUSIC, not in some degree to feel the Force of so *amiable an Union*. But to the Muses Friends it is a Force *irresistible*, and penetrates into the deepest Recesses of the Soul. . . . It is evident, that these two Arts can never be so powerful *singly*, as when they are *properly united*. For *Poetry*, when alone, must be necessarily forced to *waste* many of its richest *Ideas*, in the mere raising of Affections, when, to have been properly relished, it should have *found* those Affections in their highest Energy. And *Music*, when alone, can only raise *Affections*, which soon *languish* and *decay*, if not maintained and fed by the nutritive Images of Poetry. Yet must it be remembered, in this Union, that *Poetry* ever have the *Precedence*; its *Utility*, as well as *Dignity*, being by far the more considerable.[4]

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[1] John Brown, *A Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music* (London, 1763), p. 242. Brown climaxed his remarks (p. 238) by recommending 'the Institution of *A Poetic and Musical Academy*, for the more effectual *Re-union* of these two Arts, and their better *Direction* to their *highest Ends*.'

[2] Abbé Jean Baptiste du Bos, *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting, and Music*, trans. Thomas Nugent (London, 1748), I, 360, 386.

[3] Vicesimus Knox, *Essays Moral and Literary* (London, 1778–1779), II, 300–301.

[4] James Harris, *Three Treatises* (London, 1744), pp. 99–102. Harris had begun his analysis thus (pp. 95–99): 'It is first to be observed, that there are various *Affections*, which may be raised by the Power of *Music*. There are Sounds to make us *chearful*, or *sad*; *martial*, or *tender*; and so of almost every other Affection, which we feel. It is also further observable, that there is a *reciprocal Operation* between our *Affections*, and our *Ideas*; so that, by a sort of *natural Sympathy*, certain *Ideas* necessarily tend to raise in us certain *Affections*; and those *Affections*, by a sort of Counter-Operation, to raise the

From these remarks it is clear that neo-classical critics ascribed key significance to poetry united with music. In such a union, of course, there could be no substitute for quality:

> Is not good music set to bad poetry [Beattie wrote] as unexpressive, and therefore as absurd, as good poetry set to bad music, or as harmonious language without meaning? Yet the generality of musicians appear to be indifferent in regard to this matter. If the sound of the words be good, or the meaning of particular words agreeable; if there be a competency of hills and rills, doves and loves, fountains and mountains, with a tolerable collection of garlands and lambkins, nymphs and cupids, *bergères* and *tortorellas*, they are not solicitous about sense or elegance. . . . What is there to elevate the mind of that composer, who condemns himself to set music to insipid doggerel? Handel's genius never soared to heaven, till it caught strength and fire from the strains of inspiration.[1]

It is unfortunately true that most of Handel's oratorio texts bear the heavy stamp of the amateur. From the exalted heights of Milton and Dryden and Pope it is a dangerously sharp descent to the prosaic plain of Samuel Humphreys and James Miller and Thomas Broughton. Apparently eighteenth-century libretto-writing did not rank high as an art. In 1747 Thomas Morell attempted to excuse deficiencies in his libretto of *Judas Maccabeus* by explaining that his verses were 'design'd not as a finish'd poem, but merely as an Oratorio.'[2]

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same Ideas. . . . It will follow, that whatever happens to be the *Affection* or *Disposition* of Mind, which ought naturally to result from the Genius of any *Poem*, the *same* probably it will be in the Power of some Species of *Music* to excite. . . . The ideas therefore of Poetry must needs make the most sensible Impression, when the Affections, peculiar to them, are already excited by the Music. For here a *double Force is made co-operate to one End.* A Poet, *thus assisted*, finds not an Audience in a Temper, averse to the Genius of his Poem, or perhaps at best under a cool *Indifference*; but by the Preludes, the Symphonies, and *concurrent Operation* of the Music in all its Parts, rouzed into *those very Affections*, which he would most desire. An Audience, so disposed, not only embrace with Pleasure the Ideas of the Poet, when exhibited; but, in a manner, even *anticipate* them in their several Imaginations. . . . And hence the *genuine* Charm of Music, and the *Wonders*, which it works, thro' its great Professors.'

[1] Beattie, pp. 162–163.

[2] In a letter dated 'Circ. 1764' and addressed to an unknown correspondent, Thomas Morell supplied further information regarding his text for Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*: ' "There was a time (says Mr. Addison), when it was laid down as a maxim, that nothing was capable of being well set to musick, that was not nonsense." And this I think, though it might be wrote before Oratorio's were in fashion, supplies an

As John Brown later observed, oratorio was considered beneath the dignity of a first-rate poet:

> This Kind of Poem being unknown in ENGLAND when HANDEL arrived; and that great Musician being the first who introduced the *Oratorio*; it became a Matter of Necessity, that he should *employ* some Writer in his Service. Now this being a Degradation, to which Men of Genius would not easily submit, he was forced to apply to *Versifiers* instead of *Poets*. Thus the Poem was the Effect either of Hire or Favour, when it ought to have been the voluntary Emanation of Genius. Hence, most of the Poems he composed to, are such, as would have sunk and disgraced any other Music than his own.
>
> But although his exalted Genius bore itself up against this Weight of Dulness; yet such a leading Defect could not fail to have essential Effects on the Musician's Art. For although no Man ever possessed greater Powers of musical Expression; yet, when the Writer gave him sometimes little, and sometimes nothing to express, the main Foundation of his Art failed him: He was in the Situation of a great Painter, who should be destined to give Life by Colours, to a dead and unmeaning Design. Nay, even where any Degree of poetical Expression happened to give Play to his expressive Powers, yet still, the general Composition being unconnected, weak, and unaffecting, there could be neither Contrast nor Succession of pathetic Songs and Choirs; which, when properly united in one great Subject, heighten each other by a continued Progression, like the successive Scenes of a *well-plan'd Tragedy*. Had HANDEL's Airs and Choirs been composed in this connected Manner, and the Probability of the Representation in other Respects preserved, their Effect had been proportionable. At present, being often disjoined, and deprived of that Connexion which ought to arise from the Poet's Art, they lose all the Force which an Accumulation of Passion would have produced. They stand single: While in a well-

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Oratorio-writer (if he may be called a writer) with some sort of apology; especially if it be considered, what alterations he must submit to, if the Composer be of an haughty disposition, and has but an imperfect acquaintance with the English language. As to myself, great a lover as I am of music, I should never have thought of such an undertaking (in which, for the reasons above, little or no credit is to be gained), had not Mr. Handell applied to me, when at Kew, in 1746, and added to his request the honour of a recommendation from Prince Frederic. Upon this I thought I could do as well as some who had gone before me, and within 2 or three days carried him the first Act of *Judas Macchabæus*, which he approved of' (*The Manuscripts of J. Eliot Hodgkin, Esq. F.S.A., of Richmond, Surrey* [London, 1897], pp. 91–92. [*Historical Manuscripts Commission*, Fifteenth Report, Appendix, Part II]). Morell prepared the text for a number of Handel's oratorios. His first effort was *An Occasional Oratorio* (1746), a compilation of passages from the Bible, Spenser, Milton, and Morell himself. For the complete text see Appendix H.

conducted Poem, the Effect of every *succeeding* Song or Choir would be heightened by the Power of the *preceding*.[1]

In this passage Brown probably had in mind such oratorios as *Joshua*, *Theodora*, and *Judas Maccabeus*. Certainly most of Handel's English librettos are undistinguished, but eighteenth-century critics generally agreed that the composer was more fortunate in his texts from Dryden and Milton. As early as 1721 Charles Gildon, discussing the great 'obstacles' to 'the perfection of our songs,' pointed out the extraordinary merits of Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*:

There is scarce one master of musick, who has set a song, composed with art and fine sense, to any tolerable tune; but have generally exerted their musical faculty most upon such trifling words, as are scarce remov'd one degree from nonsense. There might be various instances given of the truth of this matter of fact; but that would here be superfluous, since the reader need only cast his eye over the collections of the most celebrated songs for musick, to find it made evident beyond a contradiction; I shall only give one instance of the contrary, tho' many might likewise be found of that, I mean Mr. *Dryden*'s *Alexander's feast*, admirable in its sense, and the most harmonious in its numbers, of any thing in the *English* tongue: Numbers so harmonious, that had one of the ancient masters been to compose it, it had been one of the most transporting and ravishing pieces of musick that had been seen in the world these thousand years. . . .[2]

II

FROM its first appearance in 1697 *Alexander's Feast* was recognized as a lyric of unusual merit. 'I am glad to heare from all Hands,' Dryden wrote to Jacob Tonson, 'that my Ode is esteemd the best of all my poetry, by all the Town: I thought so my self when I writ it but being old, I mistrusted my own Judgment.'[3] Neo-classical writers universally agreed with Dryden's verdict upon *Alexander's Feast*. Throughout the eighteenth century the number of single editions alone exceeded that of any of Dryden's other works,[4] and the poem

[1] Brown, pp. 217–219.

[2] Charles Gildon, *The Laws of Poetry* (London, 1721), p. 84.

[3] *The Letters of John Dryden*, ed. Charles E. Ward (Durham, North Carolina, 1942), p. 98.

[4] There were at least a dozen.

was translated into Latin on at least two occasions.[1] As early as 1711 Alexander Pope expressed his admiration of its virtuosity in *An Essay on Criticism*.[2] Later Joseph Warton declared Dryden's poem to be 'the most unrivalled of his compositions,' an ode which 'places the British lyric poetry above that of any other nation.'[3] Of all eighteenth-century critics Warton was most articulate in his praise:

If Dryden had never written any thing but this Ode, his name would have been immortal, as would that of Gray, if he had never written any thing but his Bard. It is difficult to find new terms to express our admiration of the variety, richness, and melody of its numbers; the force, beauty, and distinctness of its images; the succession of so many different passions and feelings; and the matchless perspicuity of its diction. . . . Such is the

[1] By Matthew Prior (*Solomon de Mundi Vanitate . . .; cui adjicitur Alexandri Convivium in S. Cæcilium Ode* [Cambridge, 1743], pp. 103–119) and by Joseph Reeve (*Miscellaneous Poetry in English and Latin*, second edition [Exeter, 1794], I, 304–319).

[2] Ll. 374–383. Pope's own *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* was generally considered less successful. According to William Ayre, one of Pope's early biographers, 'Mr. *Dryden* had gain'd such prodigious Fame by his *Feast of Alexander*, that the Poets after him were generally laugh'd at in their Attempts that Way. Mr. *Pope* however ventur'd after many Solicitations, much Encouragement, putting forward, and a Certainty of Applause from one Quarter, and has plainly shewn, that he was not the Judge of Harmony and adapting Words to Musick that *Dryden* was. It is indeed, as to the Poetical Part, the worst of our Poet's Performances. . . . As to the Sense and Design of the *Ode on Santa Cecilia's Day* they are not bad; but Mr. *Dryden*'s *Ode* is more musical without being set, than any Musick can make our Poet's' (*Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Alexander Pope, Esq.* [London, 1745], I, 79). Later Joseph Warton observed that Pope 'used to declare, that if Mr. Dryden had finished a translation of the Iliad, he would not have attempted one after so great a master; he might have said with more propriety, I will not write a music-ode after Alexander's Feast, which the variety and harmony of its numbers, and the beauty and force of its images, have conspired to place at the head of modern lyric compositions' (*An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* [London, 1756], I, 52). Pope himself was sufficiently apologetic concerning the poem: 'Many people would like my Ode on Music better, if Dryden had never written on that subject. It was at the request of Mr. Steele that I wrote mine; and not with any thought of rivalling that great man, whose memory I do, and have always reverenced!' (Joseph Spence, *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters, of Books and Men* [London, 1820], p. 12). Joseph Warton 'regretted' that Handel did not set Pope's 'celebrated' ode to music. Actually Pope's poem was eventually set to music in 1730, when Maurice Greene, not from enthusiasm for Cecilia but as his exercise for the doctoral degree at Cambridge, composed music for an abbreviated form of the ode.

[3] For Warton's response to Handel's setting of Dryden's ode see pp. 36–37. Warton found the music 'excellent' but 'not free from one or two blemishes.'

unexampled combination of poetical beauties, of almost every sort, in which this justly admired Ode abounds. No particle of it can be wished away, but the epigrammatic turn of the four concluding lines.[1]

Subsequent critics followed Warton's lead. 'The Songs and Choirs are by Turns tender, joyous, and majestic,' wrote John Brown, 'and are often calculated for the noblest and most powerful Union of Poetry and Music.'[2] James Beattie found *Alexander's Feast* 'superior to any ode of Horace or Pindar now extant' for its 'energy of words, vivacity of description, and apposite variety of numbers.'[3] Edmond Malone considered 'this unrivalled Ode' to be 'the finest composition of this kind in the English language.'[4] Sir Walter Scott regarded *Alexander's Feast* not only as the greatest English lyric but also as one of the greatest lyrics in all literature:

> In lyrical poetry, Dryden must be allowed to have no equal. 'Alexander's Feast' is sufficient to shew his supremacy in that brilliant department. In this exquisite production, he flung from him all the trappings with which his contemporaries had embarrassed the ode. The language, lofty and striking as the ideas are, is equally simple and harmonious; without far-fetched allusions, or epithets, or metaphors, the story is told as intelligibly as if it had been in the most humble prose.[5]

Perhaps Dr. Johnson made the supreme statement regarding *Alexander's Feast* in his *Life of Dryden*: 'The ode for St. Cecilia's Day,' he wrote, 'has been always considered as exhibiting the highest flights of fancy, and the exactest nicety of art. This is allowed to stand without a rival. If, indeed, there is any excellence beyond it, in some other of Dryden's works, that excellence must be found.'[6]

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[1] *The Poetical Works of John Dryden, Esq.*, ed. Joseph and John Warton (London, 1811), II, 345–346 (note).

[2] Brown, pp. 235–236.

[3] Beattie, p. 18 (note).

[4] *The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden*, ed. Edmond Malone (London, 1800), I, Part I, 285.

[5] *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. Sir Walter Scott (London, 1808), I, 489.

[6] For a full discussion of *Alexander's Feast*, showing how its technique marks a definite improvement over that of *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day* ten years before, see my article on 'Neo-Classical Criticism of the Ode for Music,' *PMLA*, LXII (1947), 399–421. See also Ernest Brennecke's excellent analysis of 'Dryden's Odes and Draghi's Music,' *PMLA*, XLIX (1934), 1–36.

It is not surprising that such a poem enjoyed enormous success throughout the eighteenth century, nor that it was set to music at least four times during the first forty years of its existence. Our chief purpose here is to consider the history of Handel's setting of *Alexander's Feast* in 1736, but before turning to this remarkable union of poetry and music it might be well to review briefly three former musical settings of Dryden's celebrated poem. The ode was originally produced for London's annual celebration of St. Cecilia's Day, November 22, 1697, when it was performed at Stationers' Hall with a musical accompaniment composed by Jeremiah Clarke, a musician of some reputation, who was then organist of St. Paul's Cathedral.[1] Shortly thereafter Clarke's composition was repeated in London at least twice,[2] but apparently the music was not judged worthy of publication, and it now appears to be irretrievably lost.[3] Perhaps, as Scott suggested, Clarke's productions were 'more remarkable for deep pathos, and delicacy, than for fire and energy'; perhaps, 'with such a turn of mind and taste, he may have failed in setting the sublime, lofty, and daring flights' of *Alexander's Feast*.[4] Malone was of the same opinion:

Though from the high rank which he held among his musical brethren, as a sweet and pathetick composer, he may be supposed to have done justice to some parts of this Ode, and from his own feelings also might be expected with peculiar felicity to have adapted musick to those passages

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[1] For the complete text of Dryden's original poem see Appendix A. As Edmond Malone points out (*The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden*, I, Part I, 288–289), the great contemporary composer, Henry Purcell, 'who had gained new laurels by the musick of Dryden's KING ARTHUR, as well as several other operas, though he had been more than once employed by the Stewards of this festival, in 1683, 1692, and probably 1694, would perhaps have been the composer on this occasion also, but to the great regret of his country he died two years before, November 21, 1695; when he was honoured by an Elegy written by our author, who appears to have much respected him.'

[2] On December 6 *The London Gazette* advertised a performance at Hickford's Dancing School on December 9; on December 13 *The London Gazette* advertised a performance at the Music Room in York Buildings on December 16, 'with an addition of a new Pastoral on the Peace, composed by Mr. Jeremiah Clarke.'

[3] For a thorough discussion of St. Cecilia's Day celebrations during this period, see William Henry Husk, *An Account of the Musical Celebrations on St. Cecilia's Day in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1857).

[4] *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. Scott, I, 410.

of the poet, where the mighty master, after having successfully infused 'soft pity,' 'smiled to see, that *love* was in the next degree';—his powers appear to have sunk under the various and opposite musical expressions, which the hilarity, animation, pathos, and sublimity of this incomparable Ode require: for his composition on this occasion added so little to his reputation, that it was never published.[1]

A second musical arrangement of *Alexander's Feast* was produced in 1711, when Thomas Clayton set to music a version of Dryden's poem 'alter'd' by the minor poet John Hughes. Early in 1711 Sir Richard Steele, then collaborating with Clayton in his 'Concerts of Musick' at the Music Room in York Buildings, directed a copy of Dryden's ode to Hughes with the following note:

Dear Sir,

Mr. Clayton and I desire you, as soon as you can conveniently, to alter this poem for music, preserving as many of Dryden's words and verses as you can. It is to be performed by a voice well skilled in recitative, but you understand all these matters much better than

Your affectionate humble servant
R. Steele[2]

In compliance with Steele's request Hughes proceeded to divide *Alexander's Feast* into recitatives, arias, and duets. Although these

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[1] *The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden*, ed. Malone, I, Part I, 300–302. F. A. Hadland (*The Musical Times*, LX [1919], 349) has called Jeremiah Clarke (1669–1707) 'a most undeservedly neglected composer' and 'one of the worthiest of Purcell's immediate successors.' Clarke produced many anthems, incidental music for a number of plays, several odes and cantatas, a few lessons for the harpsichord, and numerous miscellaneous songs published in contemporary collections. In 1700 he published *A Choice Collection of Ayres for the Harpsichord or Spinett* (containing six numbers), and in 1711 his brother-in-law, Charles King, published a volume of twenty-five numbers which, according to Hadland, 'rank high among the best instrumental music of the period.' Two volumes of his harpsichord music, dated 1700 and 1702 respectively, are preserved in the library of the Royal College of Music, and several of his keyboard works may be found among the manuscript volumes at the British Museum. As Hadland observes, 'Much of Clarke's music seems to have perished altogether, although everyone who has had anything to say about him asserts that it was both tender and graceful.' Unfortunately Clarke's death was premature. At thirty-eight he committed suicide, as Dr. Burney declared, 'before his genius had been allowed time to expand' (*A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* [London, 1776–1789], III, 596).

[2] *The Correspondence of Richard Steele*, ed. Rae Blanchard (London, 1941), p. 44.

'several Alterations' were complimented by Hughes' first biographer, William Duncombe, as 'an Improvement of that justly-admir'd Ode,'[1] Sir Walter Scott declared them 'impertinent'[2] and John Brown saw in them 'a Poet of inferior Rank.' In Brown's words, Hughes 'had not sufficiently estimated his own Strength, when he adventured to tamper with the Bow of ULYSSES. Whenever he hath attempted a *Change*, he hath quenched the poetic Fire.'[3] Edmond Malone's criticisms were more specific: 'What in the original is entitled *Chorus*, he has made *Air*; and all that is not Air, is *Recitative*.' Beyond certain rather bold alterations in Dryden's third stanza, Malone noted that Hughes' 'changes' were 'chiefly verbal' and that 'some of them, however they may have rendered the lines more commodious for musick, certainly cannot be considered as improvements.'[4] But whatever the merit of Hughes' altered text, critics were unanimous in their condemnation of Clayton's musical score.[5] Even William Duncombe felt constrained to agree that

[1] John Hughes, *Poems on Several Occasions*, ed. William Duncombe (London, 1735), I, xvii. For the complete text of Hughes' version of *Alexander's Feast* see Appendix B. Apparently Hughes was particularly concerned with libretto at this time. Numerous odes and cantatas appear among his published poems, and several prominent composers (Handel among them) wrote accompaniments for his songs. Toward the end of July, 1711, Handel mentioned Hughes in a letter to Andreas Roner: 'Faites bien mes complimens à Mons. Hughes. Je prendrai la liberté de lui ecrire avec la premiere occasion. S'il me veut cependant honorer de ses ordres, et d'y ajouter une de ses charmantes poesies en Anglois, il me fera le plus sensible grace' (*The Letters and Writings of George Frideric Handel*, ed. Erich H. Müller [London, 1935], p. 3). Following this letter Hughes presumably sent Handel his cantata, *Venus and Adonis*, which was subsequently 'set to musick' by the German composer. For the text of *Venus and Adonis* see Hughes' *Poems on Several Occasions*, II, 64–65.

[2] *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. Scott, I, 410.

[3] Brown, p. 237.

[4] *The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden*, ed. Malone, I, Part I, 303–304 (note).

[5] Thomas Clayton (*c.* 1670–*c.* 1730) was a member of King William's Royal Band from 1692 to 1702. In the latter year he proceeded to Italy for musical study, and upon his return he brought with him a number of Italian songs, which he altered and adapted to an English text entitled *Arsinoe: Queen of Cyprus*, by Pierre Motteux. This pastiche Clayton produced on January 16, 1706, as an English 'opera' of his own composition. Elated by his success, he proceeded to set Addison's *Rosamond*, which, despite Addison's high reputation, completely exposed Clayton's incompetence at its first performance on March 4, 1707. Subsequently he became associated with Nicola Francesco Haym and Charles Dieupart in their musical productions, first at Drury Lane and later at Steele's Music Room in York Buildings. Following Handel's

'Mr. *Clayton*'s Composition did not satisfy the *Connoisseurs* in Musick' at its initial performance on May 24, 1711.[1] Writing to Steele in April, Hughes had already given his opinion of Clayton's performance 'wth a freedom, w^{ch} I wou'd be loth to use to One for whom I had less Friendship, & in whose Candour & Ingenuity I did not think my Self safe.' Hughes expressed his dissatisfaction in some detail:

> The Overture of Alexander ought to be great & noble; instead of which, I find only a hurry of the Instruments, not proper (in my poor Opinion) & without any Design, or Fugue, & I'm afraid, perplex'd & irregular in the Composition, as far as I have any Ideas or Experience. Enquire this of better Judgments.
>
> The Duet of Bacchus is cheerful, & has a good Effect; But that beginning *Cupid, Phoebus* &c I cannot think shews any Art & is in Effect no more than a single Air. Nothing shews both Genius and Learning more than this Sort of Compositions, the chief Beauty of which consists in giving each Voice different Points, & making those Points work together, and interchange regularly & surprisingly, or one Point following its self in both the Voices, in a kind of Canon, as it is called. These Artfulnesses, when well executed, give infinite delight to the Ear; but that which I have mentioned is not form'd after those Designs, but where the Voices join, they move exactly together in plain Counterpoint, which shews little more than a single Air.
>
> I think the Words in general naturally enough express'd, and, in some places, pathetically; But, because you seem to think this the whole Mystery of Setting, I take this opportunity to assure you it is as possible to express Words naturally & pathetically in very faulty Composition as it is to hit a likeness in a bad Picture. If the Musick in Score, without the words, does not prove it Self by the Rules of Composition, w^{ch} relate to the Harmony & Motion of different Notes at the same time, the Notes in the singing part will not suffice, thô they express the Words ever so

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phenomenal success with *Rinaldo* on February 24, 1711, Addison and Steele, both ardent proponents of English drama and English music, proceeded to encourage performances of Clayton's English settings in the Music Room in York Buildings. For Addison's response to *Rinaldo* see *Spectator* 5.

[1] Clayton's setting of William Harrison's *Passion of Sappho* was heard at the same concert. On May 10, 1711, *Spectator* 61 advertised as published 'This Day' *The Passion of Sappho, and Feast of Alexander. Set to Musick by Mr. Thomas Clayton. As it is Performed at his House in York-Buildings.* This 'Entertainment of Musick' was first advertised in *Spectator* 70 (May 21, 1711) and thereafter repeated daily till May 24. Three subsequent performances (May 29, 1711, July 16, 1711, and January 18, 1712) were conspicuously advertised in the same periodical.

naturally. This is properly the Art of Composition, in w^ch there is room to shew admirable Skill, abstracted from the Words; & in w^ch the Rules for y^e union of sounds are a kind of Syntaxis, from which no One is allow'd to err. I do not apply this last Particular to any Thing, but only to give you a general Idea of what is Composition; Yet, upon the Whole, as far as I am able to judge, the Music of . . . Alexander, thô in some places agreeable, will not please Masters.[1]

Thomas Clayton had studied music for some years in Italy, but evidently he had brought back from that country few graces of his art. His music for *Alexander's Feast* has long since passed into oblivion, although several of his operas still exist as testimony to his inferior powers.

'Alas!' wrote Charles Gildon of *Alexander's Feast* in 1721. 'Tho' it has been twice set to musick by men of considerable reputation in the art, yet the notes of the musician have generally destroy'd, not only the sense, but the very harmony of the poet.' Gildon repeated a rumour that 'there is a third has undertaken it, a man of no mean fame in musical compositions, but I am afraid with not much more success than his predecessors; because it seems absolutely necessary for a just and great composition of this kind, that the composer should have a poetical as well as a musical *genius*. . . .'[2] Gildon's rumour was correct. The 'man of no mean fame in musical compositions' who had 'undertaken' to set *Alexander's Feast* was no less a musician than Benedetto Marcello, distinguished Venetian composer, whose *Timoteo*, a cantata for two voices, first appeared in 1720.[3] Marcello's Italian text had been prepared directly from Dryden's original by Abbé Conti, and according to F.-J. Fétis, the finished cantata enjoyed 'une grande célébrité' and is counted 'parmi les plus belles productions du génie de Marcello.'[4]

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[1] *The Correspondence of Richard Steele*, pp. 45–46.

[2] Gildon, p. 84.

[3] See Francesco Luigi Fontana, *Vita di Benedetto Marcello* (Venice, 1788), p. 85: 'Indice delle Opere Manoscritte: . . . *Timoteo*. Cantata a due voci. La poesia di queste due Celebri Cantate è del Sig. Ab. Conti. Anzi il Timoteo è una bella traduzione dell' ode Inglese del Sig. Dryden detta: *Il Banchetto di Alessandro*.' It is said that Christoph Willibald von Gluck also planned a musical setting of *Alexander's Feast*. See Otto Jahn, *Gesammelte Aufsätze über Musik* (Leipzig, 1867), p. 227. For the reputation of *Alexander's Feast* in Germany see pp. 41–42.

[4] F.-J. Fétis, *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*, second edition (Paris, 1875), V, 443.

III

As a musical performance, then, *Alexander's Feast* appears to have enjoyed only moderate success until Handel's composition in 1736 made it known to the English-speaking world. Despite the failure of Clayton's attempt twenty-five years before, Handel did not hesitate to make another trial, especially since Newburgh Hamilton, his librettist, was sanguine of a brilliant result.[1] As Romain Rolland observed, Hamilton prepared the text 'avec beaucoup de discrétion.' His libretto constitutes an almost verbatim repetition of Dryden's ode, with the addition of a somewhat tasteless 'Additional Chorus' at the conclusion.[2] Hamilton also wrote the words of a short 'Cantata' for one voice on the same subject, designed to be 'perform'd at the Beginning of the Second Act.' Originally in English, this 'Appendix' was later translated into Italian and ultimately omitted altogether. According to contemporary practice, the text was printed separately and sold before the performance at the door of Covent Garden Theatre. Hamilton's 'Preface' to this 'wordbook' is notable:

> The following ODE being universally allow'd to be the most excellent of its Kind, (at least in our Language;) all Admirers of polite Amusements, have with Impatience expected its Appearing in a Musical Dress, equal to the Subject. But the late Improvements in Musick varying so much from that Turn of Composition, for which this Poem was originally design'd, most People despair'd of ever seeing that Affair properly accomplish'd: The Alteration in the Words, (necessary to render them fit to receive modern Composition) being thought scarcely practicable, without breaking in upon that Flow of Spirit which runs thro' the whole of the Poem, which of Consequence wou'd be render'd flat and insipid. I was long of this Opinion, not only from a Diffidence of my own Capacity, but the ill Success of some ingenious Gentlemen, whose Alterations of, or Additions to the Original, prov'd equally ill-judg'd. But upon a more particular

[1] Newburgh Hamilton (*fl.* 1715–1743) is conjectured to have been a relation of the Duke of Hamilton. Little is known of his career. He was the author of two unsuccessful farces, *The Doating Lovers* (1715) and *The Petticoat-Plotter* (1720), and he also prepared the text of Handel's *Samson* (1743). In a codicil to his will, dated August 6, 1756, Handel wrote: 'I give to Mr. Newburgh Hamilton, of Old Bond-Street, who has assisted me in adjusting words for some of my compositions, one hundred pounds' (*The Letters and Writings of George Frideric Handel*, ed. Erich H. Müller [London, 1935], pp. 67–68).

[2] For the complete text of Hamilton's version of *Alexander's Feast* see Appendix C. Hamilton's verbal alterations are negligible.

ALEXANDER's FEAST;

OR, THE

POWER OF MUSICK.

A N O D E

Wrote in Honour of St. *CECILIA,*

By Mr. *DRYDEN.*

Set to MUSICK by Mr. *HANDEL.*

Hear how Timotheus' *various Lays ſurpriſe,*
And bid alternate Paſſions fall and riſe;
While, at each Change, the Son of Libyan Jove
Now burns with Glory, and then melts with Love;
Now his fierce Eyes with ſparkling Fury glow,
Now Sighs ſteal out, and Tears begin to flow;
Perſians *and* Greeks *like Turns of Nature found,*
And the World's Victor ſtood ſubdu'd by Sound.

Pope's Eſſay on Criticiſm.

LONDON:

Printed for J. and R. TONSON in the *Strand.*

M DCC XXX VI.

[Price One Shilling.]

Title-Page of the Wordbook of *Alexander's Feast*
As First Performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden
on February 19, 1736
From the Copy in the Library of Congress

Review of the Ode, these seeming Difficulties vanish'd; tho' I was determin'd not to take any unwarrantable Liberty with that Poem, which has so long done Honour to the Nation; and which no Man can add to, or abridge, in any thing material, without injuring it: I therefore confin'd myself to a plain Division of it into *Airs*, *Recitative*, or *Chorus's*; looking upon the Words in general so sacred, as scarcely to violate one in the Order of its first Place: How I have succeeded, the World is to judge; and whether I have preserv'd that beautiful Description of the Passions, so exquisitely drawn, at the same time I strove to reduce them to the present Taste in Sounds.

I confess my principal View was, not to lose this favourable Opportunity of its being set to Musick by that great Master, who has with Pleasure undertaken the Task, and who only is capable of doing it Justice; whose Compositions have long shewn, that they can conquer even the most obstinate Partiality, and inspire Life into the most senseless Words.

If this Entertainment can, in the least degree, give Satisfaction to the real Judges of *Poetry* or *Musick*, I shall think myself happy in having promoted it; being persuaded, that it is next to an Improbability, to offer the World any thing in those *Arts* more perfect, than the united Labours and utmost Efforts of a *Dryden* and a *Handel*.[1]

Warming with his theme, Hamilton burst into song in a poem addressed 'To Mr. HANDEL, On his setting to Musick Mr. *Dryden's* "Feast of Alexander" ':

Let others charm the list'ning scaly Brood,
Or tame the savage Monsters of the Wood;
With magick Notes enchant the leafy Grove,
Or force ev'n Things inanimate to move:
Be ever Your's (my Friend) the God-like Art,
To calm the Passions, and improve the Heart;
The Tyrant's Rage, and Hell-born Pride controul,
Or sweetly sooth to Peace the mourning Soul;
With martial Warmth the Hero's Breast inspire,
Or fan new-kindling Love to chaste Desire.
That Artist's Hand (whose Skill alone cou'd move
To Glory, Grief, or Joy, the Son of *Jove*;)
Not greater Raptures to the *Grecian* gave,
Than *British* Theatres from you receive;
That Ignorance and Envy vanquish'd see,

[1] *Alexander's Feast; or, The Power of Musick. An Ode Wrote in Honour of St. Cecilia, By Mr. Dryden. Set to Musick by Mr. Handel* (London, 1736), Preface.

Heav'n made you rule the World by *Harmony*.
Two glowing Sparks of that Celestial Flame,
Which warms by mystick Art this earthly Frame,
United in one Blaze of *Genial Heat*,
Produc'd this Piece in Sense and Sounds complete;
The *Sister Arts*, as breathing from one Soul,
With equal Spirit animate the *Whole*.
Had *Dryden* liv'd the welcome Day to bless,
Which cloath'd his Numbers in so fit a Dress;
When his majestick *Poetry* was crown'd,
With all your bright Magnificence of *Sound*;
How wou'd his Wonder and his Transport rise,
Whilst fam'd *Timotheus* yields to you the Prize.

In January, 1736, Handel completed his musical setting of *Alexander's Feast*, and on February 19, 1736, the ode was performed publicly for the first time at the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden. Its success was instantaneous. According to *The London Daily Post* for February 20, there 'never was upon the like Occasion so numerous and splendid an Audience at any Theatre in London, there being at least thirteen hundred persons present; and it is judg'd that the Receipt of the House could not amount to less than four hundred and fifty pounds.' Immediately plans moved forward for printing the full score. Handel's publisher, John Walsh, died on March 13, 1736, but his son continued the business of printing Handel's works, and a complete version of *Alexander's Feast* was finally published by subscription in 1738. The cost of such publication was, of course, somewhat higher than the cost of printing Handel's operas, since *Alexander's Feast* contains a greater proportion of choruses. It is nevertheless a curious fact that, despite Handel's enormous popularity, only *one* of his oratorios was published in complete form during his lifetime.[1]

To neo-classical critics the combination of Handel and Dryden represented the union of poetry and music at its highest peak of attainment. Each artist was acknowledged a master in his own sphere, and in Handel's *Alexander's Feast* the two arts realized together their noblest expression.[2] During Handel's lifetime and

[1] For some years *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato* and *Samson* appeared only in collections of 'songs.'

[2] For a thoroughly authoritative discussion of more technical aspects of Handel's music for *Alexander's Feast* see Leo Schrade, 'Studien zu Händels "*Alexanderfest*," ' *Händel-Jahrbuch*, ed. Rudolph Steglich (Leipzig, 1932), pp. 38–114.

throughout the eighteenth century *Alexander's Feast* proved as popular as anything he ever produced. As R. A. Streatfeild later explained, 'Handel's music is an admirable equivalent for the ringing rhetoric of Dryden,' and apparently Handel's own century 'preferred him in his more rhetorical vein.'[1] Soon after the publication of *Alexander's Feast* Lord Chesterfield took occasion to endorse Handel's oratorio in an essay in *Common Sense*. Considering 'the Effects of Musick in general,' Chesterfield pointed out 'the Unskilfulness of our modern Composers' in producing effective martial airs, and cited Dryden's 'celebrated *Ode* upon St. *Cæcilia*'s Day' as a superior example of the influence of music on the listener's moods. 'This we have lately heard, set to Musick by the Great Mr. *Handel*, who, for a Modern, certainly excels in the *Ortios*, or *Warlike Measure*:—But we have some *Reason to think* that the Impressions which it was observed to make upon the *Audience* soon gave Way to the *Phrygian*, or *Lascivious Movement*.'[2] Similar views regarding audience reaction were expressed by one 'Phil Harmonicus' in *The Universal Spectator*:

> *Timotheus* could move *Alexander*'s Passions as he pleas'd, and drive him into the greatest Fury; but upon the Alteration of a Note could moderate it, and bring him to himself again. I am very glad, Mr. *Spectator*, for the Honour of my Country, that I have Occasion here to mention Mr. *Dryden*'s Ode upon that Subject, which I look upon to be the finest that

[1] R. A. Streatfeild, *Handel* (London, 1909), pp. 274–275. 'If one looks in vain for profound feeling or soaring imagination,' Streatfeild continued, 'Handel gives you instead admirable workmanship, inexhaustible vigour, and unfaltering dignity of utterance. *Alexander's Feast* is a wonderful series of pictures, each one dashed off in broad splashes of colour by the hand of a master. When Handel is in this vein his simple directness of method is overpowering. He seems to hurl his effects straight in your face. It was of such music as this that Mozart was thinking when he said, "When he chooses, he strikes like a thunderbolt." ' Cf. Samuel Butler's amusing comment upon the same oratorio: 'The overture to *Alexander's Feast* is full of the hurry and bustle of servants going to and fro with plates and dishes' (Henry Festing Jones, *Samuel Butler: Author of Erewhon* [London, 1919], I, 148).

[2] *Common Sense*, October 14, 1738. Chesterfield believed that 'in Musick, as in many other Arts and Sciences, we fall infinitely short of the Ancients.' He felt the need for a national 'Tune' for England and 'most earnestly' recommended that the 'learned' Dr. Maurice Greene 'turn his Thoughts' in that direction. 'It is not from the least Distrust of Mr. *Handel*'s Ability that I address myself preferably to Doctor *Green*: But Mr. *Handel* having the Advantage to be by Birth a *German*, might probably, even without intending it, mix some Modulations, in his Composition, which might give a *German* Tendency to the Mind, and therefore greatly lessen the National Benefit, I propose by it.'

ever was written in any Language, and Mr. *Handel*'s Composition has done Justice to the Poetry. I defy any one, who is attentive to the Performance of it, to fortify himself so well, as not to be mov'd with the same Passions, with which the *Hero* is transported.[1]

On May 2, 1745, *The General Advertiser* announced publication of *An Ode to Mr. Handel*, an anonymous poem eulogizing the composer's most successful English works, and offering a brief tribute to *Alexander's Feast*:

> Or mid' the magic of successive sounds,
> That rule alternate passions as they rise,
> Again TIMOTHEUS lives,
> Again the victor yields
>
> To sacred Melody: while those sweet gales
> That breathe fresh odours o'er Elysian glades,
> And amaranthine bow'rs
> (Where now the golden harps
>
> Of blissful bards are strung) the numbers waft
> To DRYDEN's laurel'd shade; he yet more blest,
> Smiles, conscious of the charms
> Of heav'n-born Harmony,
>
> That proves the pow'r he sings, and grace the song.[2]

Later critics of *Alexander's Feast* continued to sound the note of praise.[3] 'We all know, and have felt, the effects of Handel's having

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[1] *The Universal Spectator* (London, 1747), IV, 183. Elsewhere in the same essay the author observed that 'We have at last perceiv'd our Folly in adapting agreeable Sounds to Nonsense, and with the greatest Labour adorning the greatest Trifles. Our most celebrated Masters have been lately employ'd in setting to *Musick* Parts of the Works of *Shakespear* and *Milton*. These Compositions have met with a very welcome Reception from the World, which shews that we have not so far lost our good Sense and Judgment, but we can distinguish good Things from bad. We find we are much better pleas'd, when our Reason and Passions are both affected, when Sound and Sense go together.'

[2] *An Ode to Mr. Handel* (London, 1745), pp. 9–10.

[3] 'Most of the Chorus's in his *Alexander's Feast* are compos'd with great Energy,' wrote the Reverend William Hughes in 1758. 'The accompany'd Recitatives are the very Portrait of a *Handel*' (*Remarks upon Church Musick. To which are added Several Observations Upon some of Mr. Handel's Oratorio's, And other Parts of his Works* [Worcester, 1758], p. 44).

set Dryden's ode to music,' wrote Joseph Warton in 1756. In *Alexander's Feast* the composer 'has displayed the combined powers of verse and voice, to a wonderful degree.' Even Warton, however, felt compelled to agree that Handel's music was 'not free from one or two blemishes' in its use of ornamentation:

No poem indeed, affords so much various matter for a composer to work upon; as Dryden has here introduced and expressed all the greater passions, and as the transitions from one to the other are sudden and impetuous. Of which we feel the effects, in the pathetic description of the fall of Darius, that immediately succeeds the joyous praises of Bacchus. The symphony, and air particularly, that accompanies the four words, 'fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,' is strangely moving, and consists of a few simple and touching notes, without any of those intricate variations, and affected divisions, into which, in compliance with a vicious and vulgar taste, this great master hath sometimes descended. Even this piece of Handel, so excellent on the whole, is not free from one or two blemishes of this sort, particularly in the air, 'with ravished ears,' &c.[1]

As we shall observe, eighteenth-century criticism of Handel's *Alexander's Feast* was not uniformly favourable. Horace Walpole, among others, frankly declared Dryden's ode to be 'more melodious unset than when adapted.'[2] John Brown was more specific in his criticism. In Dryden's ode, he observed, 'The *Narrative* Part is not always sufficiently *distinguished* from the *Song*.' Instead 'They run into each other in such a Manner, that the musical Composer must often find

[1] *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* (London, 1756), I, 63–64. James Beattie likewise deplored Handel's occasional 'blemishes,' especially in his use of imitation: 'Handel, notwithstanding his inexhaustible invention, and wonderful talents in the sublime and pathetic, is subject to fits of trifling, and frequently errs in the application of his imitative contrivances' (*Essays on Poetry and Music, as They Affect the Mind*, pp. 137–138). In this passage Beattie referred specifically to certain 'songs' from Handel's setting of Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, but he pointed out that 'many other examples of the same kind might be produced from the works of this great artist.' Cf. William Jackson, *Thirty Letters on Various Subjects* (London, 1783), I, 49–51: 'The most common mistake of composers is to express words and not ideas. . . . There is no trap so likely to catch composers as the words *high* and *low*, *down* and *up*. . . . Handel had leisure, at the conclusion of an excellent movement, to endeavour at an imitation of the rocking of a cradle . . . and has his *ups* and *downs* . . . in plenty.'

[2] 'Though I like Handel, I am not bigoted. I thought Dryden's *Ode* more harmonious before he set it than after, yet he had expression. . . .' (*Letters*, ed. Mrs. Paget Toynbee [Oxford, 1904], X, 187.) Walpole was often, though not always, a barometer of public taste. For his response to Handel's *Samson* see p. 66.

himself embarrassed, whether to accompany with Recitative, or a more compleat Melody.' Brown regretted that Newburgh Hamilton's adaptation of *Alexander's Feast* failed to 'rectify this Disorder' in Dryden's ode. "Tis obvious to remark,' he continued, 'that HANDEL was sometimes perplexed by this Irregularity of the poetic Composition, when he set DRYDEN's Ode to Music: For some Parts are thrown into Recitative which might seem rather to demand the Song; and others are thrown into Song, which, in their present Narrative Form, seem rather to demand the Recitative.'[1]

Perhaps the most elaborate and judicious eighteenth-century criticism of Handel's *Alexander's Feast* appears in an anonymous volume entitled *An Examination of the Oratorios which have been Performed This Season at Covent-Garden Theatre* (1763). In this thoroughgoing analysis of 'the present state of music in England' the writer maintained that 'the oratorio, either from a partiality to its author, or misapprehension of its nature, has continued unexamined and uncensured, and in consequence remains incomplete, and unimproved.' Being 'strongly sensible of the wretched state in which the oratorio has, from the first, subsisted in this nation,' the author threw in 'his mite towards rectifying the public taste, by attempting an examination of such of *Handel's Oratorios* as are at present in performance' in London. After enumerating certain 'defects and improprieties' of 'the poetical and musical constitution of the oratorio,' he offered a 'particular examination' and 'candid review' of *An Occasional Oratorio, Messiah, Samson, Acis and Galatea, Judas Maccabeus,* and *Alexander's Feast.* His 'observations' upon the 'universally known and deservedly admired' music of *Alexander's Feast* afford rich insight into critical opinion regarding Dryden's ode during the third quarter of the eighteenth century. 'Many have attempted the union of poetry and music under similar forms,' the author wrote; 'but all, except Mr. *Dryden*, have failed in the *complex* character; some from want of merit in their own province, others, like Mr. *Pope*, for want of a *Handel.*' In his 'examination' of *Alexander's Feast* he proposed to 'hint at the imperfections' of this 'noble' piece in its 'complex' character:

Mr. *Dryden* begins with a *detail* of *particulars*,
'Twas at the royal feast for Persia *won*,
By Philip*'s warlike son*, &c.

[1] Brown, pp. 236–237.

Which detracts greatly from that enthusiasm which is peculiar to the *opening* of the *odal species*, and the *particulars enumerated* are of such a nature as to be incapable of being rendered more striking by a musical accompanyment.—The deficiency of the *moral end*, that of *firing an impetuous young prince to an act of vengeance*, has already been observed by Dr. [John] *Brown*; but this is not all.—The intention of the poem is to aggrandize the power of music by shewing its effects upon the passions; but every passion raised here is of the vicious kind, except his pity for *Darius*; *his magnanimity is the folly of being a god*; his *jollity* is madness; his *love* is *at best* for a THAIS; and his *anger* is *rage and cruelty*. If Mr. *Dryden* then meant to recommend music from its effects, he has evidently counteracted his own design; if he intended to point out its *evil* tendency, he has certainly done wrong in making it act on the noblest of mortal feelings, *humanity*.—The great falling-off in the conclusion has been repeatedly observed, and censured; the subject of it has no connection with the preceding part of the poem, and the quibble in the four last lines is puerile; for my own part I never read this sublime performance but I sincerely lament that the author of *Alexander's Feast* ever wrote it, as an *Ode* for St. *Cæcilia's Day*.

In his 'candid review' of Handel's oratorio the writer observed that Newburgh Hamilton's 'mixture' of solos, duets, and choruses is 'well preserved,' but he noted that 'Many examples might be given of *fugues* and *canons* calculated only for a *display* of the *composer's art*.' Furthermore, he cited instances of 'the hurtfulness of the da capo,' of 'too much division on single syllables,' and of 'imitation of single words even where it is contrary to the sense of the passage.' Several recitatives he praised as 'fine,' pathetic,' 'noble,' and 'by no means ill expressed,' and the recitative to the words 'Hark! Hark! the horrid sound' he pronounced to be 'the best' in the oratorio:

The uncommon force and expression of the instrumental accompanyment raises at once the strongest ideas of horror and amazement, and gives us a more striking picture of *Alexander*'s situation than could have been given by any powers of song. To conclude this article it must be owned in honour to Mr. *Handel*, that his unparallelled strength in instrumental music gave him a prodigious advantage *in accompanied Recitative* over all other composers; tho' at the same time, justice must induce us at least to be sorry, that he attended too little to this species of composition, or despised it too much.

Indeed this species of composition has been too much under-rated even by those who had not *Handel*'s talents for *greater things* to plead in excuse. If properly executed, it is capable both of pleasing, and affecting; it will admit more frequent and forcible *imitations* than even *song* itself, and the

freedom of the *time* and *measure* will often afford greater latitude for *expression* to the singer, than the more confined ones of *air* or *choir.*

Like Dr. Brown, the author of *An Examination of the Oratorios* noted Newburgh Hamilton's failure to distinguish properly between the '*Narrative* Part' and the '*Song*,' but unlike Brown, the latter critic laid the blame on Handel himself:

The . . . defect of *setting those parts to Recitative which should have been Air, and those to Air which should have been Choir*, is what *Handel* frequently falls into, and for which he alone is to be blamed. . . . In *Alexander's Feast* instances recur but too frequently. Who that reads the following lines, . . .

With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres,

would not expect either a striking accompanied *recitative*, from so spirited a narration; or a great imitative chorus, from so sublime a picture as the words contain. Instead of either of these (and it might with propriety have been either), we have a trifling treble air, whose subject is an airy imitation of *nod* and *shake*, made more ridiculous by long divisions upon *shake.*

So again . . . we have a song,

Softly sweet, to Lydian *measures,*
Soon he sooth'd his soul to pleasures,

which *Dryden* certainly meant for *recitative*, because it is a narrative, and that the next lines, *War he sung was toil and trouble*, &c. should have been expressed by the Lydian *measures* he had just mentioned. Yet perhaps it is a fault rather in *Dryden* than *Handel*; for had he set it as the author intended, we should have lost one of the finest songs in the whole performance.—But the most capital error in this point is in the second act, . . . where the most insipid parts are made into air and choir, while the most sublime and striking are debased by miserable *recitatives.* Thus

Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian *abodes,*
And glitt'ring temples of their hostile gods,

is an unanimated, unnatural *recitative*, while the tame *narrative* parts

The princes applaud with a furious joy,
And the king seiz'd a flambeau, with zeal to destroy;

And

Thais *led the way,*

To light him to his prey,
And like another Helen, *fir'd another* Troy,

are vainly attempted to be rendered affecting by being set to *air* and *choir*, and a poor endeavour to express *furious joy*, and *firing*. The following instance is still worse. The *grand chorus* is to these words;

At last divine Cecilia *came,*
Inventress of the vocal frame:
The sweet enthusiast from the sacred store
Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit, *and arts unknown before;*

the main part of which turns on the *expressive* words *nature's mother wit*; whereas it is only a detail of particulars which might have been much better imitated and expressed by an instrumental accompanyment. After so *capital* a mistake, the reader will not perhaps wonder to find those very lines which immediately follow set to a *recitative*,

Your voices tune, and raise them high,
Till they eccho from the vaulted sky
The blest Cæcilia's *name:*
Music to heav'n and her we owe,
The greatest blessing that's below.
Sound loudly then her fame.

Whether these words are capable of *expression*, whether they contain a subject worthy of a *grand chorus*, and *Handel*'s greatest efforts of genius; whether, as they are at present, they either *please* or *strike*, let his greatest admirers determine.[1]

During the eighteenth century Handel's *Alexander's Feast* grew steadily in popularity both in London and throughout the provinces. As public performances became more frequent and new editions of the oratorio became more numerous, Dryden's ode came to be regarded as the finest lyric in the language, and his stature as a lyricist increased accordingly.[2] In his study of Dryden's reputation in eighteenth-century Germany Milton D. Baumgartner has pointed out that Dryden's fables and classical translations enjoyed widespread favour both in England and in Germany, but that none of his works aroused such commendation from the best eighteenth-century English and German critics as *Alexander's Feast* and *A Song for St.*

[1] *An Examination of the Oratorios which have been Performed This Season at Covent-Garden Theatre* (London, 1763), pp. 37–48.

[2] See George N. Shuster, *The English Ode from Milton to Keats* (New York, 1940). Note especially Chapter Six: 'Ode Writers of the Augustan Age' (pp. 146–185).

Cecilia's Day.[1] It is undoubtedly true that Handel's setting of these two odes aided materially in perpetuating Dryden's reputation.

Speaking of *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, Sir Walter Scott declared that its merit 'has been so completely lost' in that of *Alexander's Feast* that 'few readers give themselves the trouble of attending to it.' Yet, he observed, 'it is perhaps only our intimate acquaintance with the second ode that leads us to undervalue the first, although containing the original ideas, so exquisitely brought out and embodied' in *Alexander's Feast*.[2] Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* was first performed on November 22, 1687, to the music of Giovanni Baptista Draghi, a composer of considerable merit, whose work was, however, totally eclipsed by Handel's celebrated performance half a century later.[3] Inspired by the initial success of *Alexander's Feast* in 1736, Handel turned to Dryden's first ode in the autumn of 1739.[4] His finished composition was first heard at the Theatre-Royal

[1] Milton D. Baumgartner, *On Dryden's Relation to Germany in the Eighteenth Century* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1914). Baumgartner concludes (pp. 85–86): 'Notwithstanding the fact that Dryden no longer ranks as a great lyricist in England and Germany, it cannot be denied that in the eighteenth century he was ranked by both English and German critics as a lyricist of the first magnitude. The popularity of *Alexander's Feast* in England, upon which the fame of Dryden as a lyricist primarily rests, paved the way for his popularity in Germany. . . . The favorable attitude of the German critics, and the numerous translations convince us that Dryden's lyrics combined with Handel's musical compositions played a part in shaping the lyrical poetry of Germany during the eighteenth century.' In his *Zerstreute Blätter* Herder devoted one whole chapter to the legend of St. Cecilia and to the English odes written in her honour (*Herders Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan [Berlin, 1913], XVI, 253–272). In his *Adrastea* Herder ranked *Alexander's Feast* as one of the greatest and most enduring of Handel's compositions (*Ibid.*, XXIII, 557, 564–565).

[2] *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. Sir Walter Scott (London, 1808), XI, 166. For the complete text of Dryden's original poem see Appendix D.

[3] Draghi's music has never been published. Ernest Brennecke, Jr. ('Dryden's Odes and Draghi's Music,' *PMLA*, XLIX [1934], 9) indicates that the complete manuscript score, possibly in the composer's handwriting, was preserved in the library of the Sacred Harmonic Society till its dissolution in 1882, when the entire library (including this item) was acquired by the Royal College of Music. An imperfect copy of Draghi's manuscript may be found in the British Museum.

[4] Composition was begun on September 15 and completed on September 24. A few weeks later Handel introduced the three movements of his overture into the well-known Concerto Grosso No. 5 in D Major. For an interesting discussion of Handel's music for Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* see Bertrand H. Bronson, 'Some Aspects of Music and Literature in the Eighteenth Century,' a paper delivered at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library (University of California, Los Angeles) on October 24, 1953. For the complete text of Handel's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* see Appendix E.

ALEXANDER's FEAST;

OR, THE

POWER OF MUSICK.

A N O D E.

Wrote in Honour of St. *CECILIA,*

And a SONG *for St.* CECILIA's *Day.*

Both written by Mr. *DRYDEN.*

And Set to MUSICK by Mr. *HANDEL.*

Hear how Timotheus' *various Lays ſurpriſe,*
And bid alternate Paſſions fall and riſe;
While, at each Change, the Son of Libyan Jove
Now burns with Glory, and then melts with Love;
Now his fierce Eyes with ſparkling Fury glow,
Now Sighs ſteal out, and Tears begin to flow;
Perſians *and* Greeks *like Turns of Nature found,*
And the World's Victor ſtood ſubdu'd by Sound.
Pope's Eſſay on Criticiſm.

LONDON:

Printed for J. and R. TONSON in the *Strand.*

M DCC XXXIX. Price One Shilling.

Title-Page of the Wordbook of *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*
As First Performed (in Conjunction with *Alexander's Feast*)
at the Theatre-Royal in Lincoln's Inn Fields on November 22, 1739
From the Copy in the Collection of Gerald E. Coke, Esq.

in Lincoln's Inn Fields on St. Cecilia's Day, November 22, 1739, in conjunction with *Alexander's Feast* and 'two new Concerto's for several Instruments.' Despite its brevity, *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day* proved highly successful, and during the season of 1739–1740 it was heard in London six times, always in conjunction with *Alexander's Feast* or *Acis and Galatea.*[1] It is one of Handel's happiest and most characteristic performances.[2] Along with *Alexander's Feast* it did much, as we have seen, to enhance Dryden's reputation as one of the greatest English lyricists, and, curiously enough, the success of these two works frequently led critics to draw detailed parallels between the collaborating artists. As Charles Avison observed in 1753:

> Mr. HANDEL is in Music, what his own DRYDEN was in Poetry; nervous, exalted, and harmonious; but voluminous, and, consequently, not always correct. Their Abilities equal to every Thing; their Execution frequently inferior. Born with Genius capable of *soaring the boldest Flights*; they have sometimes, to suit the vitiated Taste of the Age they lived in, *descended to the lowest.* Yet, as both their Excellencies are infinitely more numerous than their Deficiencies, so both their Characters will devolve to latest Posterity, not as Models of Perfection, yet glorious Examples of those amazing Powers that actuate the human Soul.[3]

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[1] Later the ode was frequently heard in conjunction with *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato.* In 1790 Mozart wrote 'additional accompaniments' for *Alexander's Feast* and *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, and during the nineteenth century this 'improved' orchestration came, unfortunately, to be accepted as standard throughout England and Germany.

[2] As R. A. Streatfeild (pp. 281–282) observed: 'Dryden's poem, written as it was for musical setting, offers every possible opportunity for varied treatment. The opening recitative, "When nature underneath a heap of jarring atoms lay," is a curious piece of descriptive writing, in which odd little snatches of *naïf* realism jostle passages of real grandeur. In some of the airs that follow, the obbligato passages now sound sadly antiquated and meaningless, but there is a splendidly martial ring in the very Purcellian "The trumpet's loud clangour," and the *alla Hornpipe*, "Orpheus could lead the savage race," into which Handel, who apparently liked Scotchmen no more than did Dr. Johnson, introduced an unmistakable allusion to the bagpipes, is deliciously fresh and quaint. But the two great movements of the work are the lovely organ-song, "But oh! what art can teach," with its wonderful atmosphere of tranquil ecstasy, and the tremendous finale, in which the awful terrors of the Judgment Day are painted with a sublime majesty worthy of the brush of Michael Angelo himself.'

[3] Charles Avison, *A Reply to the Author of Remarks on the Essay on Musical Expression* (London, 1753), pp. 50–51.

CHAPTER TWO

Handel and Milton

I

READERS acquainted with the work of Alwin Thaler[1] and Raymond Dexter Havens[2] are already aware of Milton's enormous influence upon the literature and music of eighteenth-century England. Few Augustans fully escaped Milton's influence, and certainly none failed to recognize his genius. In the light of Milton's lifelong devotion to music it is particularly gratifying to note that much of his best-known work was set to music for dramatic performance in London theatres during the Georgian period. Such names as Purcell, Arne, Handel, and Haydn by no means exhaust the list of composers who devoted their art to Miltonic themes. In our present review of eighteenth-century musical versions of Milton's poetry it will be especially instructive to observe the *manner* in which the poet of *Paradise Lost* was appropriated to succeeding generations, for, as Thaler points out, 'it would be difficult to find a more striking index of the taste of the times than that which his adapters give us.' Our chief concern here is Handel's treatment of Milton in his two oratorios, *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato* (1740) and *Samson* (1743), but first it might be well to note briefly Milton's great vogue among eighteenth-century librettists and musicians of lesser rank.[3]

In 1728 Johann Ernst Galliard published by subscription his musical version of *The Hymn of Adam and Eve, out of the Fifth Book of Milton's Paradise Lost*. This setting of Milton's 'Morning Hymn' inspired

[1] Alwin Thaler, 'Milton in the Theatre,' *Studies in Philology*, XVII (1920), 269–308.

[2] Raymond Dexter Havens, *The Influence of Milton on English Poetry* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1922).

[3] See George Sherburn, *The Early Popularity of Milton's Minor Poems* (Chicago, 1919–1920).

numerous compliments from the composer's friends,[1] and later in the century Dr. Burney declared Galliard's work to be 'extremely well set in the grave and learned style of his master Steffani.'[2] Galliard's *Morning Hymn* was the first of at least five eighteenth-century musical arrangements based upon *Paradise Lost.*[3] In March, 1744, Mrs. Delany, an ardent Handelian, wrote that she had already 'collected' an oratorio 'out of Milton's Paradise Lost' which she hoped would 'do' for her composer-friend:

> And how do you think *I have lately been employed*? Why, I have made a drama for an oratorio, out of Milton's Paradise Lost, to give Mr. Handel to compose to; it has cost me a great deal of thought and contrivance; . . . though all I have had to do has been collecting and making the connection between the fine parts. I begin with Satan's threatenings to seduce the woman, her being seduced follows, and it ends with the man's yielding to the temptation; I would not have a word or a thought of Milton's altered; and I hope to prevail with Handel to set it *without* having *any of the lines put into verse*, for that will take from its dignity.[4]

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[1] Henry Carey addressed a poem 'To Mr. GALLIARD, on His Setting an Hymn of MILTON's' (*Poems on Several Occasions*, third edition [London, 1729], p. 112). In a letter written on August 28, 1747, Miss Catherine Talbot praised Galliard's performance for its union of the 'most excellent music' and 'the noblest words and sentiments' (*A Series of Letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot, from the Year 1741 to 1770*, ed. Montagu Pennington [London, 1809], I, 214). A second edition of the music appeared in 1773. Johann Friedrich Reichardt's setting of Milton's *Morning Hymn* (as translated by Herder) was published posthumously in 1835 and performed by Mendelssohn at the Düsseldorf Festival of that year.

[2] *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (London, 1776–1789), IV, 639.

[3] Havens (pp. 639, 646) notes that *Paradise Lost* also influenced the style of at least two eighteenth-century tributes to Handel: Henry Carey's apostrophe 'To Mr. George-Frederick Handel' (1729) and John Langhorne's *Tears of Music. A Poem to the Memory of Mr. Handel* (1760). A third poem, *An Ode to Mr. Handel* (1745), was, according to its anonymous 'Advertisement,' written in imitation of Milton's poetic style: 'The measure of the following Ode was first us'd by MILTON, since whom I do not know of any Poet who has adopted it.'

[4] *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany*, ed. Lady Llanover (London, 1861–1862), II, 280. It is interesting to note that one of Mrs. Delany's later projects was inspired by Handel's *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato*. On January 21, 1747, she wrote that ' "The Allegro" is a *drawing*, I have imagined in imitation of Mr. Handel's *Let me wander, etc.*, and I have brought in all the images as well as I could. "The Penseroso" is in embryo' (II, 451). See my article, 'Mrs. Delany: An Eighteenth-Century Handelian,' *The Musical Quarterly*, XXXII (1946), 12–36.

It is pleasant to imagine Milton, Handel, and Mrs. Delany in collaboration, but the proposed oratorio was never set to music by Handel, and it has unfortunately not survived. As Thaler observes, however, 'It is interesting to note the implication that Handel seems to have had a decided personal share in the changes forced upon Milton by his adapters.'[1] In 1760 Benjamin Stillingfleet's version of *Paradise Lost*, set to music by John Christopher Smith, was printed and twice performed,[2] and twenty years later Richard Jago made an arrangement called *Adam* (1784?), for which no score is known to have been composed. Most celebrated of all musical works drawn from *Paradise Lost* is, of course, Haydn's *Creation*, based upon Baron van Swieten's German translation of an English text by one Mr. Lidley, who, it is said, had submitted the libretto to Handel without success. Haydn's famous oratorio was first performed publicly in Vienna on March 19, 1799. Shortly thereafter it was introduced in England, where it has ever since vied in popularity with Handel's *Messiah*. As early as September 27, 1802, Anna Seward described a performance of *The Creation* at the Birmingham Festival. 'It is little wonder,' she complained, 'that the words translated from the German almost literally into English, should be neither sense nor grammar, nor that they should make wicked work with Milton. . . .' On the following day she listened 'with increased veneration' to 'the sublimities of the Messiah,' after which she concluded that 'Haydn, great master though he be, sinks eclipsed, like Dryden, when, in his alteration of the play of the Tempest, he puts on the armour of Shakespeare.'[3]

Paradise Lost was by no means the only familiar work of Milton to be arranged for musical performance during the neo-classical

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[1] Thaler, p. 282.

[2] In his *Anecdotes of George Frederick Handel and John Christopher Smith* (London, 1799), p. 63, William Coxe lists among Smith's compositions the following oratorio: 'Paradise Lost. Three Parts. Words by Stillingfleet. *Mitcham, December* 1, 1757. *Finished at Foxley, July* 29, 1758.'

[3] Anna Seward, *Letters*, ed. A. Constable (Edinburgh, 1811), VI, 45–48. Miss Seward found Haydn inferior to Handel in several respects: 'The recitatives, and their accompaniments, are almost entirely imitative of other sounds, and of motion, and are without sentiment; while to those instrumental imitations all which Handel has given us in that style are infinitely superior. How poor, in the Creation, are the strains which imitate the lark and nightingale, compared to those of similar aim in L'Allegro and Il Penseroso! How inferior Haydn's plumy concert to that given in the prelude and accompaniments to "Hush ye pretty warbling choir," in Acis and Galatea!' See my former study, *Anna Seward: An Eighteenth-Century Handelian* (Williamsburg, 1947).

period.[1] In 1738 *Comus* was adapted for the stage by Dr. John Dalton, prebendary of Worcester Cathedral, who explained in his Prologue that he 'gave Milton's beauties to the public eye' in an attempt 'to vindicate neglected worth.'[2] According to Henry John Todd, Dalton's 'ingenious alteration' transformed an austere morality play into an elegant and profitable eighteenth-century pantomime:

> Many additional Songs were introduced from Milton's own Poems; and several from the editor's pen, written with much elegance and taste. The drama opens, and closes, exactly as the original does. It is divided into three Acts, as the original Mask should seem to be: the first, ending with the *Lady's* acceptance of *Comus's* offer to conduct her to his cottage; the second commencing with the entrance of the *two Brothers*, and ending with their determination, under the *Spirit's* guidance, to attack the necromancer, *Comus*; the last, opening with similar scenery and conduct to that which follows in the original, but with *Comus* first banishing *Melancholy*, in the initial strains of L'ALLEGRO, and with the additional wiles of *Euphrosyne* to seduce the captive Lady. In this adaptation of the Mask, *Euphrosyne* is a new character; and there are also *two Attendant Spirits*, among the speakers. The music was composed by Dr. [Thomas Augustine] Arne; and, like all the compositions of that celebrated master, gave unbounded satisfaction. The Song '*Sweet Echo*,' still maintains all the charm of novelty, and the Bacchanalian Ballad, '*The wanton God*,' presents a specimen of characteristic distinction, not easily to be equalled.[3]

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[1] Milton's *Song on a May Morning* was set by Michael Festing in 1740. (See *Miscellany of Lyric Poems Performed in the Academy of Music* [London, 1740], pp. 61–62.) In 1755 parts of *L'Allegro* and *The Arcades* were used as songs in Garrick's opera, *The Fairies*, set to music by John Christopher Smith. Milton's *Lycidas* was set by William Jackson in 1767 and performed in memory of the Duke of York. (See *Lycidas: A Musical Entertainment, the Words Altered from Milton* [London, 1767].) Milton's *At a Solemn Musick* was set by Sir Hubert Parry in 1887.

[2] *Comus, a Mask: (Now adapted to the stage) as alter'd from Milton's Mask at Ludlow-Castle, which was never represented but on Michaelmas Day, 1634* . . . (London, 1738), Prologue. Henry Lawes composed the original music for *Comus* in 1634; Henry Purcell produced a second version about 1685.

[3] *Comus, A Mask*, ed. Henry John Todd (Canterbury, 1798), Part II, pp. 195–196. According to Dr. Burney (*A General History of Music*, IV, 659), 'Arne established his reputation as a lyric composer, by the admirable manner in which he set Milton's *Comus*. In this masque he introduced a light, airy, original, and pleasing melody, wholly different from that of Purcell or Handel, whom all English composers had hitherto either pillaged or imitated. Indeed, the melody of Arne at this time, and of his Vauxhall songs afterwards, forms an æra in English Music; it was so easy, natural, and agreeable to the whole kingdom, that it had an effect upon our national taste; and . . . it was the standard of all perfection at our theatres and public gardens.'

In its Arne-Dalton version Milton's *Comus* soon became one of the most popular musical entertainments of the eighteenth century.[1] It gave both composer and adapter a lasting reputation. From its successful introduction to public notice the masque also grew popular as a poem, and 'in proportion to the progress of taste and knowledge,' as Todd later observed, 'the admiration, which it deserves and commands, has since undoubtedly increased.'[2] During Arne's lifetime the masque was frequently revived in cities and towns throughout the kingdom, and its songs remained popular for a century after his death.[3]

From these facts it is obvious that the poet of *Paradise Lost* and *Comus* enjoyed considerable popularity on the eighteenth-century British stage. Of Milton's so-called 'minor' poems a number had already found their way, in whole or in part, into contemporary musical texts before Handel shifted from Italian opera to English oratorio. It was but natural that the German composer, seeking English texts familiar to his potential audience, should turn to a poet whose sublimity was akin to his own, and it is not surprising that Milton's crowning achievement, *Samson Agonistes*, should provide the text for Handel's finest oratorio. Nor is it surprising that the composer's devotion to the English countryside should lead him to set to music the charming series of idyllic pastoral scenes to be found in Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. It is, however, astonishing that after setting these two splendid works Handel should resort without hesitation to the uninspired rhymes of Milton's youthful paraphrases of the Psalms. Late in 1745 the Reverend Thomas Morell provided Handel with a text for *An Occasional Oratorio*, a performance purporting to celebrate the 'occasion' of George II's recent success in quelling the Jacobite Rebellion of Bonnie Prince Charlie.[4] Morell's

[1] On April 5, 1750, *Comus* was performed in London for the benefit of Milton's granddaughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Foster.

[2] Todd, Part I, p. xviii.

[3] *Comus*, 'a masque in two acts,' was 'revived' at the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden on April 28, 1815, 'the original music by Handel and Arne, with some additions by Bishop; the overture by Cherubini; the dances by Mr. Ware.'

[4] *A New Occasional Oratorio. As it is Perform'd at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden. The Words taken from Milton, Spenser, &c. And Set to Musick by Mr. Handel* (London, 1746). During his long career Thomas Morell (1703–1784), clergyman and classical scholar, published numerous sermons (listed in *The Gentleman's Magazine*) and compiled the text for Handel's *Occasional Oratorio* (1746), *Judas Maccabeus* (1747), *Alexander Balus* (1748), *Joshua* (1748), *Solomon* (1749), *Theodora* (1750), *Jephtha* (1752), and

libretto falls into three parts, the first two consisting chiefly of selections from Milton's perversions of the Psalms, with the addition, curiously enough, of isolated passages from Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, *The Teares of the Muses*, and *An Hymn to Heavenly Beautie*. Part Three, on the other hand, contains several important pieces borrowed from Handel's *Zadok the Priest* (1727) and *Israel in Egypt* (1739), interspersed with poetical allusions to contemporary events from the pen of Thomas Morell himself.[1] This heterogeneous monstrosity inevitably aroused the indignation of more than one eighteenth-century critic, but perhaps the most articulate protest came in 1763 from the anonymous author of *An Examination of the Oratorios which have been Performed This Season at Covent-Garden Theatre:*

> Were I condemned to give a definition of this piece, I should do it in much the words of drunken Trincalo in the Tempest. 'A song upon somebody, sung by the picture of nobody.' Were I to give my opinion, I would say with Handel, 'The music is good music. D——n your words.' Were I to guess at the author, I should conclude either that the managers were ambitious of appearing in the complex character of poet and musician, or that it was the learned labours of some loyal parish clerk, from the deep acquaintance with psalmody and Sternhold, which shines conspicuous through the whole.
>
> Conceive, gentle reader, a work without a plan, without a subject; where there is neither any event represented, any character pourtrayed, any personage introduced, or any end inculcated; and then you will have some distant conception of this unparalleled performance.

Insisting that 'our poet is the legitimate offspring of *Sternhold*,' the author spoke with wry sarcasm of Milton's paraphrase of Psalm III:

> Yet first peruse the following recitative in our bard's favour, which, for the variety of its numbers, is not to be paralleled either from *Pope* or *Dryden*.

The Triumph of Time and Truth (1757), a translation from the Italian of Cardinal Pamfili. Morell's well-known lines beginning 'See the conquering hero comes,' originally written for *Joshua*, were subsequently transferred to *Judas Maccabeus*. In *Alexander Balus* the first line of the duet beginning 'Hail wedded love, mysterious law' was taken from *Paradise Lost*, IV, 750. For Morell's account of how he came to prepare the text for *Judas Maccabeus* see p. 21 (note).

[1] For the complete text of Handel's *Occasional Oratorio* see Appendix H. On the autograph manuscript the overture is dated 'Anno 1746.' The oratorio was first performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden on February 14, 1746.

A

NEW OCCASIONAL ORATORIO.

As it is Perform'd at the

THEATRE-ROYAL *in* Covent-Garden.

The Words taken from MILTON, SPENSER, *&c.*
And Set to Muſick by Mr. *HANDEL.*

LONDON:
Printed for J. and R. TONSON and S. DRAPER in the *Strand.*

M DCC XLVI.

[Price One Shilling.]

Title-Page of the Wordbook of *An Occasional Oratorio*
As First Performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden
on February 14, 1746
From the Copy in the Collection of Gerald E. Coke, Esq.

Of many millions the populous rout,
I fear not, tho' incamping round about
They pitch their tents against me;
My God will rise, my help is in the Lord.

Here the confounded *Printer* has committed another notorious blunder; he has made the third and fourth line no rhime, when the first and second tally so nicely; I make no doubt but the author wrote it thus:

My God will rise, my help is in Lord THE.

and so the last rhime is as complete as the former, and the sentiment and poetry not a farthing the worse. . . .

After having been so prolix upon the poetry, it must naturally be expected, that something should be said of the music; but this the writer deems unnecessary in the present case. If the reader acquiesces in the definition given above, he must immediately perceive, that music, however angelic can never make such a composition either *interesting* or *affecting*: If, on the contrary, he agrees to the rule which was received in Mr. Addison's time, '*that nothing but what was nonsense was capable of being well set to music*;' he may then venture to rank this at the head of all *Oratorios*, and propose it as a pattern of universal imitation.[1]

II

OF Handel's many librettists none surpassed Charles Jennens in the art of sinking in poetry. Born at Gopsall Hall in Leicestershire in 1700, this literary amateur was educated at Balliol College, Oxford. Upon succeeding to the family estate in 1747 he built thereon a Brobdingnagian mansion in which he resided in princely style, remarkable for the number of his servants, the splendour of his equipages, and the profusion of his table. It was Jennens' custom to surround himself with a retinue of sycophants who contrived to keep him ignorant of current opinion by extolling his literary talents and musical skill. From his town house in Great Ormond Street, Bloomsbury, he sometimes drove to his publisher's office in Red

[1] *An Examination of the Oratorios which have been Performed This Season at Covent-Garden Theatre* (London, 1763), pp. 10–16. Of Morell's verses beginning 'May God from whom all mercies spring' the author comments as follows: 'This is so *orthodox* and *loyal*, that it would be heretical and disaffected to remark on the sentiment; and indeed it would be *pity* to criticize the poetry. Yet one thing I would, in friendship, suggest to the author, not to be so open for the future, in borrowing from *Chevy-Chase*, since the plagiarism is too flagrant to escape the notice of the meanest proficient *in the marks of imitation*.'

Lion Court (a distance of five minutes' walk) in a magnificent chariot drawn by four horses with plumes, attended by four lackeys who swept the pavement free of oyster shells before the Gopsall squire descended. It is strange that an age of decorum and conformity could produce such grotesque originals as Charles Jennens, but it was this eccentric millionaire who collaborated with Handel on a bowdlerized version of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* in the autumn of 1739.[1] To reconcile the conflicting tastes of Milton's two poems Jennens concocted an adjunct entitled *Il Moderato*. Having amalgamated *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* into alternate strophes and antistrophes, Jennens adorned the combined result with these fifty octosyllabic verses from his own pen. As Handel's nineteenth-century biographer, Victor Schoelcher, observed, 'A great poet like Milton would never have imagined this poor Moderato, with his mediocrities.'[2] Jennens' prosaic muse cut a poor figure in Milton's august company, but his ponderous verses were partially redeemed by the skill with which his libretto was assembled.[3]

With Jennens' text before him Handel commenced the task of composition on January 19, 1740. Part I was finished on January 25, Part II on February 2, and Part III on February 9, the whole composition thus requiring but twenty-two days for completion.[4] On

[1] Jennens also arranged the texts for Handel's *Saul* (1739), *Messiah* (1742), and *Belshazzar* (1745). Despite his vanity, obstinacy, and pomp, Jennens was profusely liberal to needy nonjurors, and his friendship for Handel was warmly reciprocated. At his death the composer bequeathed him two paintings by Denner. Later Jennens unwisely published several worthless editions of Shakespeare's tragedies which aroused merciless sneers from George Steevens and others.

[2] Victor Schoelcher, *The Life of Handel*, trans. J. Lowe (London, 1857), p. 229.

[3] For the complete text of *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato* see Appendix F. Although Jennens made few deletions in Milton's poems, he completely rearranged the verses into an elevated duologue in which Cheerfulness and Melancholy alternately present their attractions. Parts I and II thus involve selection and rearrangement but little alteration of Milton's text. Part III (*Il Moderato*) is Jennens' original work.

[4] As R. A. Streatfeild (pp. 282–283) observed: 'Here Handel laid aside his wig, and wrote a work which stands by itself for freshness of inspiration and delicacy of treatment. *L'Allegro* is a series of exquisite *genre* pictures sketched with the lightest touch and yet elaborated with the most intimate detail. Nothing that Handel has left us shows more convincingly his love of nature. *L'Allegro* is full of delicious studies in *plein-airisme*. The country breezes blow freshly and sweetly through it, and the perfume of the wild rose lingers in its tender melodies. The recitative, "Mountains, on whose barren breast," is a wonderful piece of landscape-painting, and who has ever surpassed the romantic moon-rise in the second part of "Sweet bird," so rarely

L'ALLEGRO,
IL PENSEROSO,
ED
IL MODERATO.

In THREE PARTS.

Set to Muſick by Mr. *HANDEL.*



LONDON:

Printed for J. and R. TONSON in the *Strand.*

M DCC XL.

[Price One Shilling.]

Title-Page of the Wordbook of *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato*
As First Performed at the Theatre-Royal in Lincoln's Inn Fields
on February 27, 1740
From the Copy in the Collection of Gerald E. Coke, Esq.

February 27 the oratorio was introduced at the Theatre-Royal in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and during the first season its music was heard five times with great success:

> When Mr. Handel first exhibited his Allegro and Penseroso, there were two ingenious Gentlemen who had bought a Book of the Words, and thought to divert themselves by reading it before the Performance began. *Zounds* (cried one of them) *what damn'd Stuff this is!—Damn'd Stuff indeed,* replied his Friend. *God so!* (replied the other, who then first cast his Eyes on the Title-Page) *the Words are Milton's.*[1]

On March 21, 1740, John Walsh announced publication of *Songs in L'Allegro* at four shillings; on May 8 he published 'A Second Collection' of songs from *L'Allegro* at three shillings; finally, on May 16, he advertised the songs as 'publish'd complete.' During the season of 1740–1741 the oratorio was revived three times 'with several new additions,' and late in 1741 Handel took it to Dublin, where it was, according to *Faulkner's Journal,* 'crowded with a more numerous and polite Audience than ever was seen upon the like Occasion.' Handel's music 'was superior to any Thing of the Kind in this Kingdom before; and our Nobility and Gentry to shew their Taste for all Kinds of Genius, expressed their great Satisfaction, and have already given all imaginable Encouragement to this grand Musick.'[2]

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sung by the sopranos who revel in the faded *coloratura* of the opening section? In a different vein is the enchanted mystery of the "summer eves by haunted stream," and the woodland magic of "Hide me from day's garish eye." It is worth noting that *L'Allegro* was written during the great frost of 1740, yet there is no touch of winter in its merry strains. Snow-bound as he was in London, Handel seems to have harked back in imagination to the fields and hedgerows of Edgware. *L'Allegro* rings with the sound of rustic mirth. "Let me wander" is a delicious little idyll of the meadows, leading into the innocent gaiety of "Or let the merry bells ring round," with youth and maiden dancing in the chequered shade. Another perfect little vignette is the hunting scene pictured in "Mirth admit me of thy crew," and the note of honest English merriment rings clear in the splendidly vigorous laughing-song, "Haste thee, nymph." But *L'Allegro* is not all out-of-door life by any means. There is a charming little song in which the bellman in the street and the cricket on the hearth have a quaint kind of duet, and the fireside picture in "Oft on a plat of rising ground," with the curfew tolling in the distance, is as perfect as a Dutch interior by Teniers or Ostade.'

[1] *The Covent-Garden Journal,* March 31, 1752.

[2] *Faulkner's Dublin Journal,* December 29, 1741. Early performances (and therefore early wordbooks) of Handel's oratorios varied considerably. The composer rewrote or deleted arias and choruses whenever circumstances required

On December 29 Handel wrote Jennens describing his success:

I opened with the Allegro, Penseroso, & Moderato, and I assure you that the Words of the Moderato are vastly admired. The Audience being composed (besides the Flower of Ladyes of Distinction and other People of the greatest quality) of so many Bishops, Deans, Heads of the Colledge, the most eminent People in the Law as the Chancellor, Auditor General, &ct. all which are very much taken with the Poetry. So that I am desired to perform it again the next time.[1]

Following Handel's great success in Dublin *L'Allegro* became a popular performance on both sides of the Irish Sea.[2] In London Handel conducted the oratorio frequently until his death in 1759, and during the eighteenth century the text and score went through numerous separate editions. Critics constantly associated Handel's name with Milton's companion poems, and, as John Walter Good points out, it may have been the excellence of the Handel-Milton collaboration that led to the translation of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* into French (1766) and into German (1782).[3] Certainly these little masterpieces were the last of Milton's minor poems to achieve popular distinction. In 1756 Joseph Warton went so far as to assert that 'by a strange fatality' *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* 'lay in a sort of

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[1] *The Letters and Writings of George Frideric Handel*, ed. Erich H. Müller (London, 1935), pp. 41–42. Thaler (p. 286) regards this passage as 'a possible indication of Handel's personal responsibility for the changes in Milton's text.' He adds that 'The publishers of the later editions of the Milton-Handel text apparently did not agree with the composer on this point, for they had the good judgment to suppress the *Moderato* in all but the first two editions.' *Il Moderato* appeared only in the editions of 1740 and 1750.

[2] Michael Kelly's amusing account of his success with the 'Laughing Air' from *L'Allegro* indicates that Handel's oratorio was appreciated by English audiences as late as 1800: 'I heard [Samuel Harrison] sing the laughing song, without moving a muscle; and determined, though it was a great risk, to sing it my own way, and the effect produced justified the experiment: instead of singing it with the serious tameness of Harrison, I laughed all through it, as I conceived it ought to be sung, and as must have been the intention of the composer: the infection ran; and their Majesties, and the whole audience, as well as the orchestra, were in a roar of laughter, and a signal was given from the royal box to repeat it, and I sang it again with increased effect. Mr. [Joah] Bates assured me, that if I had rehearsed it in the morning, as I sang it at night, he would have prohibited my experiment. I sang it five times in the course of that season by special desire' (*Reminiscences* [London, 1826], I, 325–326).

[3] John Walter Good, *Studies in the Milton Tradition* (Urbana, Illinois, 1915), p. 40.

obscurity, the private enjoyment of a few curious readers, till they were set to admirable music by Mr. Handel.'[1] Despite the probable exaggeration of Warton's statement, it is clear that, while *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* exerted relatively little influence before 1740, Handel's music stimulated a more general appreciation of Milton's poems among Englishmen of the latter half of the century.[2] As early as May, 1740, one nameless bard burst into the following feeble but well-meant rhapsody addressed '*To Mr.* HANDEL. *On hearing* ALEXANDER'*s Feast*, L'Allegro ed ill Penseroso, *&c.*'

> If e'er *Arion*'s music calm'd the floods,
> And *Orpheus* ever drew the dancing woods;
> Why do not *British* seas and forests throng
> To hear the sweeter notes of *Handel*'s song?
> This does the falshood of the fable prove,
> Or seas and woods, when *Handel* harps, wou'd move.
> If music was to touch the heart design'd,
> To ease the pain'd, or charm the chearful mind;
> And has the ear in this no other part,
> Than as it opes a passage to the heart;
> How comes it we those artless masters bear,
> Who slight the heart, and only court the ear?
> And when they use a finer term, they cry
> 'Tis air, and into air they let it fly.
> But *Handel*'s harmony affects the soul,
> To sooth by sweetness, or by force controul;

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[1] Joseph Warton, *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* (London, 1756), I, 40. Havens (pp. 430–431) feels that Warton 'went altogether too far' in his reference to *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*: 'Handel's music undoubtedly did much to make people familiar with Milton's work outside of the epic field, and in particular with the companion pieces; but those who admired the octosyllabics before 1740, like those who cared for *Paradise Lost* before 1712, were by no means limited to "a few curious readers". . . . Certainly men who were to become the chief poets of the mid-century and were to give Milton's pieces their great vogue did not become acquainted with them through Handel's work. . . . In fact, it seems highly probable that Warton had the cart before the horse, and that Handel came to use *Allegro* and *Penseroso* through the influence of some discriminating friends upon whom the beauty of the poems had recently dawned.'

[2] Havens (p. 451) notes that after 1740 the number of imitations of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* 'increased so rapidly that it would be both impracticable and unprofitable to consider them all.' As an example he cites John Gilbert Cooper's *The Estimate of Life* (1746), which, like Handel's oratorio, consists of three parts, *The Melancholy*, *The Cheerful*, and *The Moderate*.

And with like sounds as tune the rolling spheres,
So tunes the mind, that ev'ry sense has ears.
When jaundice jealousy, and carking care,
Or tyrant pride, or homicide despair,
The soul as on a rack in torture keep,
Those monsters *Handel*'s music lulls to sleep.
How, when he strikes the keys, do we rejoice!
Or when he fills a thousand tubes with voice,
Or gives his lessons to the speaking string,
And some to breathe the flute, and some to sing;
To sound the trumpet, or the horn to swell,
Or brazen cylinder to speak compel;
His art so modulates the sounds in all,
Our passions, as he pleases, rise and fall;
Their hold of us, at his command they quit,
And to his pow'r with pride and joy submit.
Thou, sovereign of the lyre, dost so excel,
Who against thee, against thy art rebel.
But uncontested is in song thy sway;
Thee all the nations where 'tis known obey:
E'en *Italy*, who long usurp'd the lyre,
Is proud to learn thy precepts and admire.
What harmony she had thou thence did'st bring
And imp'd thy genius with a stronger wing;
To form thee, talent, travel, art, combine,
And all the powers of music now are thine.[1]

If the merit of this verse is more than dubious, at least its loyal sentiment is commendable. Unfortunately for Handel, however, most of London's frivolous aristocracy did not share this rhymester's enthusiasm, for not only did the British seas and forests fail to throng his concerts, but the British lords and ladies as well. But on May 2, 1745, at the height of Handel's financial despair, *The General Advertiser* announced publication of *An Ode to Mr. Handel*, an anonymous poem praising several of the composer's oratorios, among them *Alexander's Feast* and *L'Allegro*. The poet introduced the following passage after complimenting the work of Dryden:

Nigh whom, supreme amidst the tuneful train,
In lovely greatness shines
The Bard, who fearless sprung

[1] *The Gentleman's Magazine*, X (1740), 254. The poem is signed 'G.O.'

Beyond the golden sphere that girts the world,
And sung embattled Angels: He too hears
Enchanting accents, him
Delights the lovely lay,

Responsive to his own; in pensive thought
Now lowly languid to the lulling lute,
That suits the Cypress Queen
And makes deep sadness sweet;

Or to the plaintive warbles of the wood,
Whose wanton measure, in the gentle flow
Of soft'ned notes, returns
Wild echoes to the strain.

But hark! the Dryad MIRTH with cheering horn
Invites her mountain-sister to the chace,
The jocund rebecks join
The merriment of MAY.

That to the tabor trips, and treads the round
Of rustic measures to the sprightly pipe,
Mingled with merry peals
That fill the festal joy.[1]

Readers inclined to deplore the indifferent quality of these stanzas should realize that most eighteenth-century effusions upon 'the Raptures of bold *Handel*'s Strain' were intolerably pedestrian, and that *An Ode to Mr. Handel* is actually somewhat superior to the bulk of rhymed encomium addressed to the German composer. During the Georgian century few master spirits sacrificed their precious life-blood upon the altar of St. Cecilia. But a flourishing tribe of lesser spirits worshipped at her inner shrine, and in their turgid odes and tumid stanzas Handel was repeatedly likened unto Arion, Amphion, and Orpheus.

As the century progressed *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato* steadily rose in popularity among critics of music and literature. Writing of Handel's *Samson* in 1749, Thomas Newton noted that 'That great artist has done equal justice to our author's L'Allegro and Il Penseroso, as if the same spirit possessed both masters, and as if the

[1] *An Ode to Mr. Handel* (London, 1745), pp. 10–11

God of music and of verse was still one and the same.'[1] Other Milton editors followed suit. In Handel's oratorio, wrote Thomas Warton, Milton's 'expressive harmonies . . . received the honour which they have so seldom found, but which they so justly deserve, of being *married to immortal verse.*'[2] William Lisle Bowles pointed out that 'There are few Odes completely adapted to Music in our language,' but 'happily,' he said, Milton's 'divine Penseroso and l'Allegro have found in Handel a composer worthy of the Poetry.'[3] To Dr. John Brown Handel's oratorio seemed pleasant if not particularly elevated: 'The L'ALLEGRO and IL PENSEROSO,' he wrote, 'are two elegant Poems; and are finely set to Music by HANDEL: But being merely *descriptive*, and in no Degree *pathetic*, they cannot be ranked among the highest Forms of Poetry; nor could they give Play to his highest Powers of Expression.'[4] In his 'remarks' upon Charles Avison's famous *Essay on Musical Expression* (1752) William Hayes answered Avison's objection to musical 'imitation' by specific reference to descriptive passages in *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato:*

> May not Imitation be consistent with *Air* and *Harmony?* And is there an absolute Necessity for excluding the *latter*, in order to support the *former?* —And further; are we not in all Cases to make the Sound an Eccho to the Sense, as well in setting descriptive Poetry, as such, that is calculated to the more interesting and affecting Purposes? If not; with what Propriety could MILTON's *L'allegro il Penseroso* have been set to Music, which is chiefly descriptive—I believe no reasonable Person, or Judge of Words and Music, will deny that the beautiful, *picturesque* Scenes, which MILTON describes, are greatly heightened and assisted, by the Music Mr. HANDEL has adapted to them: And yet it consisteth chiefly of the *mimetic* or *imitative* Kind; not that it is defective, either in *Air* or *Harmony*. The Characters of *Chearfulness* and *Melancholy* are nevertheless finely supported: And therefore I must insist upon it, there cannot be a more complete Model of true *musical Expression*, notwithstanding it abounds with *Imitation*. . . . For there is not a Scene which MILTON describes, were CLAUDE LORRAIN or POUSSIN to paint, could possibly appear in more lively Colours, or give a truer Idea of it, than our GREAT MUSICIAN has by his *pictoresque* Arrangement of musical Sounds; with this Advantage, that his Pictures

[1] *Paradise Lost*, ed. Thomas Newton (London, 1749), I, xliv.

[2] *Poems upon Several Occasions, by John Milton*, ed. Thomas Warton (London, 1785), p. x.

[3] *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.*, ed. William Lisle Bowles (London, 1806) I, 161.

[4] Brown, p. 218 (note).

speak. Let it here be noted, I mention not this Work as the most capital of his Performances; but, as I said before, on account of it's consisting chiefly of Imitation, and as a perfect Piece in it's Kind; his *Symphonies* forming the most beautiful Scenery, copied from simple Nature.[1]

Dr. James Beattie also stressed the 'propriety' of Handel's imitations in *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato.* Insisting that 'no imitation should ever be introduced into music purely instrumental,' Beattie declared that in vocal music 'legitimate imitations may be employed; both because the subject of the song will render them intelligible, and because the attention of the hearer is in no danger of being seduced from the principal air.'[2] In the 'first part' of Handel's 'excellent' aria, 'Hide me from day's garish eye,' the composer 'imitates the murmur of groves and waters by the accompaniment of tenors'; in another aria, 'Oft on a plat of rising ground,' he 'makes the bass

[1] William Hayes, *Remarks on Mr. Avison's Essay on Musical Expression* (London, 1753), pp. 65–67.

[2] Cf. John Mainwaring, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel* (London, 1760), pp. 184–187: 'The proper place for most musical imitations, is in the Symphonies and Accompaniments. There are indeed some few sounds, which Nature herself employs to express the stronger emotions of the human heart, which the voice may imitate. But it is common for the Masters not only to forget the nature and extent of this imitative power in Music, but also to mistake the subject on which to employ it. A too close attachment to some particular words in a sentence, hath often misled them from the general meaning of it. HANDEL himself, from his imperfect acquaintance with the English language, has sometimes fallen into these mistakes. A Composer ought never to pay this attention to single words, excepting they have an uncommon energy, and contain some passion or sentiment. To do HANDEL justice, he is generally great and masterly, where the language and poetry are well adapted to his purpose. The English tongue abounds with monosyllables and consonants. Tho' these cannot always be avoided, yet the writers of musical dramas should always pick out such as are the least harsh and disagreeable to the ear. The same regard must be had to the sentiments, as to the language. The more simple and natural they are, the more easily will Music express them. There was a time (says Mr. ADDISON) when it was laid down as a maxim, that nothing was capable of being well set to Music, that was not nonsense. This satyr is equally just and beautiful. But tho' the sense of such productions cannot be too strong, the poetry of them may be too fine. If it abounds with noble images, and high wrought descriptions, and contains little of character, sentiment, or passion, the best Composer will have no opportunity of exerting his talents. Where there is nothing capable of being expressed, all he can do is to entertain his audience with mere ornamental passages of his own invention. But graces and flourishes must rise from the subject of the composition in which they are employed, just as flowers and festoons from the design of the building. It is from their relation to the whole, that these minuter parts derive their value.'

imitate the evening-bell'; in 'Sweet bird that shun'st the noise of folly' a German flute provides the chief accompaniment, 'imitating occasionally the notes of the nightingale.' Sometimes, Beattie observed, 'where expression and imitation happen to coincide, and the latter is easily managed by the voice,' Handel 'makes the song itself imitative.' In 'Let the merry bells ring round,' for example, Handel 'makes the voice in the beginning imitate the *sound* of a chime of bells, and in the end the *motion* and gaiety of a dance.' Later Beattie pointed out that 'Handel, notwithstanding his inexhaustible invention, and wonderful talents in the sublime and pathetic, is subject to fits of trifling, and frequently errs in the application of his imitative contrivances.' But 'no Body,' he concluded, 'will question the propriety' of 'these imitations' in *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato.*[1]

III

AMONG the obscure figures of eighteenth-century English literature few would appear at first glance to deserve less recognition than Elizabeth Tollet (1694–1754), an affluent spinster whose sole volume of verse was privately printed a year after her death. Yet it was probably this all-but-forgotten poetess who gave Handel the original inspiration for his greatest oratorio. A fairly accomplished musician herself, Elizabeth Tollet frequently attended the composer's performances, and after hearing *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato* in 1740 she addressed a poem of twenty-eight lines 'To Mr. HANDELL,' urging him to turn to *Samson Agonistes* for his next choral work:

> The Sounds which vain unmeaning Accents bear
> May strike the Sense and play upon the Ear:
> In youthful Breasts inspire a transient Flame;
> Then vanish in the Void from whence they came.

[1] James Beattie, *Essays on Poetry and Music, as They Affect the Mind* (Edinburgh, 1776), pp. 136–138. Throughout the nineteenth century Handel's *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato* was frequently performed and highly esteemed. On May 24, 1844, Edward FitzGerald wrote to Frederic Tennyson: 'I also plunge away at my old Handel of nights, and delight in the Allegro and Penseroso, full of pomp and fancy. What a pity Handel could not have written music to some great Masque, such as Ben Jonson or Milton would have written, if they had known of such a musician to write for' (*Letters & Literary Remains*, ed. William Aldis Wright [London, 1902], I, 193–194).

But when just Reason animates the Song,
With lofty Style, in Numbers smooth and strong,
Such as young *Ammon*'s Passions cou'd controul,
Or chear the Gloom of *Saul*'s distemper'd Soul;
To these the Goddess Muse shall tune her Voice:
For then the Muse directs the Master's Choice.
Such Themes are suited to the Hero's Mind:
But rural Lays have Charms for all Mankind.
Whether the Poet paints the native Scene,
Or calls to trip it on the level Green:
Or leads the Wand'rer by the Moon along,
While the sweet Chauntress tunes her Even-Song:
The serious Mind with sudden Rapture glows;
The Gazer sinks into sedate Repose:
And each in Silence doubts, if more to praise
The Pow'r of *Handell*'s Notes, or *Milton*'s Lays.
One Labour yet, great Artist! we require;
And worthy thine, as worthy *Milton*'s Lyre;
In Sounds adapted to his Verse to tell
How, with his Foes, the *Hebrew* Champion fell:
To all invincible in Force and Mind,
But to the fatal Fraud of Womankind.
To others point his Error, and his Doom;
And from the Temple's Ruins raise his Tomb.[1]

Seldom is good advice followed by such excellent results. Whatever his source of inspiration, Handel's librettist, Newburgh Hamilton, produced the text of *Samson*, a three-act oratorio 'Alter'd and adapted to the Stage from the SAMSON AGONISTES of *John Milton*,' sometime before September, 1741, when Handel commenced his task of composition. Hamilton's 'Preface' contains valuable information regarding his motive in adapting *Samson Agonistes* and provides significant comments upon his technique and approach:

Several Pieces of *Milton* having been lately brought on the Stage with Success, particularly his *Penseroso* and *Allegro*, I was of Opinion that nothing of that Divine Poet's wou'd appear in the Theatre with greater

[1] Elizabeth Tollet, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1755), pp. 136–137. Although the poem is undated, its allusions to *Alexander's Feast*, *Saul*, and *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato* prove that it was produced later than February, 1740, and earlier than September, 1741, when Handel set to work on *Samson*. See W. T. B., 'Elizabeth Tollet and Handel,' *The Musical Standard*, XXXVII (1912), (I), 411, (II), 29.

Propriety or Applause than his SAMSON AGONISTES. That Poem indeed never was divided by him into Acts or Scenes, nor design'd (as he hints in his Preface) for the Stage; but given only as the Plan of a Tragedy with Chorus's, after the manner of the Ancients. But as Mr. *Handel* had so happily introduc'd here *Oratorios*, a musical Drama, whose Subject must be Scriptural, and in which the Solemnity of Church-Musick is agreeably united with the most pleasing Airs of the Stage: It would have been an irretrievable Loss to have neglected the Opportunity of that great Master's doing Justice to this Work; he having already added new Life and Spirit to some of the finest Things in the *English* Language, particularly that inimitable Ode of *Dryden*'s, which no Age nor Nation ever excell'd.

As we have so great a Genius amongst us, it is a pity that so many mean Artifices have been lately us'd to blast all his Endeavours, and in him ruin the ART itself; but he has the Satisfaction of being encourag'd by all true Lovers and real Judges of Musick; in a more especial manner by that Illustrious Person, whose high Rank only serves to make his Knowledge in all Arts and Sciences as conspicuous as his Power and Inclination to patronize them.[1]

In adapting this POEM to the Stage, the Recitative is taken almost wholly from *Milton*, making use only of those Parts in his long Work most necessary to preserve the Spirit of the Subject, and justly connect it. In the Airs and Chorus's which I was oblig'd to add, I have interspers'd several Lines, Words, and Expressions borrowed from some of his smaller Poems, to make the whole as much of a piece as possible: Tho' I reduc'd the Original to so short an Entertainment, yet being thought too long for the proper Time of a Representation, some Recitative must be left out in the Performance, but printed in its Place, and mark'd to distinguish it.[2]

To the student of Milton's reputation in eighteenth-century England it is particularly interesting to note that the 'several Lines, Words, and Expressions' which Hamilton 'borrowed' from Milton's 'smaller Poems' include passages from at least four familiar works: *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, *On Time*, *At a Solemn Musick*,

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[1] This fulsome compliment is probably directed at Frederick, Prince of Wales, to whom the oratorio is dedicated 'with all Humility' by '*His* ROYAL HIGHNESS'*s most devoted, most dutiful, and most obedient humble Servant.*'

[2] *Samson. An Oratorio. As it is Perform'd at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden. Alter'd and adapted to the Stage from the Samson Agonistes of John Milton. Set to Musick by George Frederick Handel* (London, 1743), Preface. For the complete text of Handel's *Samson* see Appendix G. Here, as in Hamilton's original arrangement, recitative which 'must be left out in the Performance' is enclosed in quotation marks.

and *Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester.*[1] In Hamilton's rather audacious patchwork *Samson Agonistes* is somewhat clumsily adapted to the exigencies of oratorio tradition, but his libretto nevertheless follows the clean and noble outline of Milton's tragedy. Physical action is reduced to a minimum, and the story is concentrated upon the period of Samson's blindness, imprisonment, and death.[2] Thaler observes that Hamilton doubtless 'worked as earnestly and reverently as he knew how,' but he adds that 'one cannot leave his version of *Samson* without the feeling that the marriage of Handel's music and Milton's words was not as felicitous a union as it might have been.'[3] As early as 1763 Dr. John Brown noted that 'The *Oratorio* of SAMSON is properly *dramatic*: But the Poem is so much changed in the Attempt towards accommodating it to Music, that it can hardly be regarded as the Work of MILTON.'[4] In the same year the author of *An Examination of the Oratorios*, praising *Messiah* and *Samson* as the 'two most finished performances of Mr. *Handel*, in the sacred and dramatic form,' observed certain 'incidental absurdities' in Hamilton's adaptation of *Samson Agonistes*:

> The *Oratorio* of *Samson* professes, in the title page, to be *altered* from the *Samson Agonistes* of *Milton*; and, indeed, it is so: but whether for the *better*, or *worse*, the reader must judge from comparing them himself. . . . Upon the composition . . . it will be sufficient to observe, that, as an Oratorio, it is incumbered with the absurdities of the dramatic form; that the poetry (except a few of the airs) is a *cento* from *Milton*; that the plan is *Milton's*; and none of its errors, therefore, are to be charged upon the present composer, except such improprieties as he has introduced himself.[5]

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[1] As Havens (p. 430, note) observes, the last twelve lines of Act I are adapted from *On Time*; four of the last six lines of Act II, and six of Act III, Scene I, are adapted from the *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*; six lines of Act III, Scene III, are adapted from the *Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester* (ll. 47–50, 67–68); and the last six lines of Act III are adapted from *At a Solemn Musick*.

[2] Rutland Boughton, 'Concerning Samson,' *The Musical Standard*, XXV (1906), 102.

[3] Thaler, p. 278. In his thorough analysis of the *Samson* text (pp. 276–278) Thaler notes: (1) that Hamilton's device of providing 'airs' for singers by putting Milton into rhyme 'often leads to poor results'; and (2) that Hamilton's condensation of Milton, while on the whole judicious, occasionally causes him to miss 'some of his best opportunities.'

[4] Brown, p. 218 (note).

[5] *An Examination of the Oratorios which have been Performed This Season at Covent-Garden Theatre* (London, 1763), pp. 25–26.

On September 14, 1741, Handel completed the final chorus of *Messiah*, having composed a whole oratorio in the incredibly short period of twenty-four days. With characteristic energy he turned at once to *Samson*. Part I was finished on September 29, Part II on October 11, and Part III on October 29.[1] At its first performance on February 18, 1743, *Samson* proved an immediate success, and during the first season it was 'acted' eight times by a distinguished cast including Susannah Cibber, Kitty Clive, and John Beard. On February 26 Lady Hertford reported that the 'new oratorio called *Sampson*' was 'filled with all the people of quality in town; and they say Handel has exerted himself to make it the finest piece of music he ever composed, and say he has not failed in his attempt.'[2] Even Horace Walpole was compelled to agree that *Samson* was a public favourite. 'The Oratorios thrive abundantly,' he wrote on March 3; 'for my part, they give me an idea of heaven, where everybody is to sing whether they have voices or not.' For *Samson* Handel 'has hired all the goddesses from farces and the singers of *Roast Beef* from between the acts at both theatres, with a man [John Beard] with one note in his voice, and a girl [Susannah Cibber] without ever an one.' At Covent Garden these motley performers 'sing, and make brave hallelujahs,' while 'the good company encore the recitative, if it happens to have any cadence like what they call a tune.'[3] An anonymous letter written on March 8 provides further evidence of Handel's remarkable success with *Samson*:

Our Friend Mr. Handell is very well, and Things have taken a quite different Turn here from what they did some Time past; for the Publick will be no longer imposed on by Italian Singers, and some wrong Headed Undertakers of bad Opera's, but find out the Merit of Mr. Handell's Composition and English Performances: That Gentleman is more esteemed than ever. The new Oratorio (called *SAMSON*) . . . has been performed

[1] This date is placed after the chorus, 'Glorious hero.' Upon his return from Dublin late in 1742 Handel added the final aria and chorus, 'Let the bright seraphim' and 'Let their celestial concerts all unite,' along with the aria, 'Come, come, no time.' These three additions are dated October 12, 1742. It is a remarkable fact that Handel's two greatest works, *Messiah* and *Samson*, were produced within the miraculously brief period of ten consecutive weeks.

[2] Helen Sard Hughes, *The Gentle Hertford: Her Life and Letters* (New York, 1940), pp. 242, 244.

[3] Horace Walpole, *Letters*, ed. Mrs. Paget Toynbee (Oxford, 1903), I, 327–329.

SAMSON.

AN

ORATORIO.

As it is Perform'd at the

THEATRE-ROYAL *in* Covent-Garden.

Alter'd and adapted to the Stage from the SAMSON AGONISTES of *John Milton.*

Set to Muſick by GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL.

LONDON:

Printed for J. and R. TONSON in the *Strand.*

M DCC XLIII.

[Price One Shilling.]

Title-Page of the Wordbook of *Samson*
As First Performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden
on February 18, 1743
From the Copy in the Collection of Gerald E. Coke, Esq.

four Times to more crouded Audiences than ever were seen; more People being turned away for Want of Room each Night than hath been at the Italian Opera.[1]

Unlike most of Handel's oratorios, *Samson* enjoyed widespread favour from the beginning. During the composer's lifetime it was second in popularity only to *Messiah*, and throughout the eighteenth century it was heard countless times in every shire of the kingdom. Its vogue was substantially increased by Walsh's publication of thirty-one 'songs' from *Samson* as early as 1743, and some years later, after numerous incomplete editions, John Randall published the full score. *Samson* represents Handelian oratorio at its best. It is said to have been Handel's favourite work, and it undoubtedly did much to stimulate appreciation for *Samson Agonistes* among eighteenth-century Englishmen. On December 27, 1743, Miss Catherine Talbot wrote enthusiastically of her satisfaction during a performance of *Samson* at Oxford:

I will own the having been highly delighted with several songs in Sampson, and especially with the choruses. I heard that oratorio performed this winter in one of the College Halls, and I believe to the full as finely as it ever was in town: and having never heard any oratorio before, I was extremely struck with such a kind of harmony as seems the only language adapted to devotion. I really cannot help thinking this kind of entertainment must necessarily have some effect in correcting or moderating at least the levity of the age; and let an audience be ever so thoughtless, they can scarcely come away, I should think, without being the better for an evening so spent.[2]

Subsequent comments were equally enthusiastic. In April, 1744, *The London Magazine* featured eight anonymous verses written after '*Hearing Mr.* HANDEL*'s* SAMPSON, *at the Theatre in* Covent-Garden':

> Rais'd by his subject, *Milton* nobly flew,
> And all *Parnassus* open'd to our view:
> By *Milton* fir'd, brave *Handel* strikes our ear,

[1] *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, March 15, 1743. It was Faulkner's custom to print excerpts from private letters in his column of 'advices' from London.

[2] *A Series of Letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot, from the Year 1741 to 1770*, ed. Montagu Pennington (London, 1809), I, 44.

And every power of harmony we hear.
When two such mighty artists blend their fire;
Pour forth each charm that genius can inspire,
The man whose bosom does not raptures feel,
Must have no soul, or all his heart be steel.[1]

In his edition of *Paradise Lost* (1749) Thomas Newton noted that *Samson Agonistes* had recently 'been brought upon the stage in the form of an Oratorio; and Mr. Handel's music is never employed to greater advantage, than when it is adapted to Milton's words.'[2] Nine years later some excellent criticism of Handel's *Samson* appeared in an extremely rare volume of *Remarks upon Church Musick* (1758), published in Worcester 'By a Lover of Harmony.' A second edition, issued five years later, disclosed that its author was the Reverend William Hughes, minor canon of Worcester Cathedral Church and Vicar of St. Peter's in Worcester. In his somewhat fulsome 'Remarks' Hughes insisted that Handel's 'Beauties' are 'Numerous and Various,' and he went on to explain in some detail why *Samson* 'must always stand foremost' among the works of 'that Celebrated Master' of music:

And here I must beg leave to be of an Opinion, that the *Oratorio* of *Samson* is a Work, (a Work! let me repeat it again) which must always stand foremost in the Compositions of that great *Harmonist*. There is such a constant glow of Ideas, such a noble and never failing Spirit of Invention preserv'd thro' the whole; that never were heard in any Composition before. And this is still the more remarkable considering the great length of it.

Horace has observ'd, that

——opere in longo fas est obrepere Somnum.

But Mr. *Handel* desires no such Indulgence. Mr. Handel sleep! Where does he sleep? So far from Sleeping, that he never seems to take a gentle Nod.

If we consider the Airs in this Composition, we shall find them not only pleasing but Spirituoso. To mention a few of them. *Honour and Arms* &c. is certainly one of the finest Songs in the World. *Return O God of Hosts* &c. is the very Spirit of Church-Musick. *With plaintive Notes* &. is Nature it self. *My Faith and Truth* &c. is an inimitable Duet. As for the whole of the Chorus's, they are so finely adapted to the Words, that to

[1] *The London Magazine*, XIII (1744), 200.

[2] *Paradise Lost*, ed. Thomas Newton (London, 1749), I, xliv.

determine in favour of one would be doing a sort of Injustice to all the rest. They touch! they strike! they animate! they warm!

The Beauties in this single Oratorio are so very numerous, that to specify them all with a proper Degree of Accuracy, would swell this Pamphlet into a Volume.

There are certain happy Moments for Genius's, when the Soul as if fill'd with Fire divine, takes in all Nature, and spreads upon all Objects, that heavenly Life that animates them, those engaging Strokes that warm and ravish us. In short Mr. *Handel* in this *Oratorio* seems (according to the Language of the Roman Orator) *mentis viribus excitari, divino Spiritu afflari.*

But before I conclude these imperfect Observations upon this great display of Mr. Handel's, it may be prudent to make some small Matter of Inquiry in Order to know, whether the Chorus of Israelites is exact *Counter-Point?*

If Mr. *Handel* has excell'd this Work in the *Oratorio* of the *Messiah* (as many are inclin'd to think) I must confess that I have neither Judgment or Abilities sufficient to discern it. No one will pretend to say that it is not a great Composition, but then it does not exactly follow that the Oratorio of Samson is not greater.[1]

Early in 1760 the Reverend John Langhorne produced *The Tears of Music. A Poem to the Memory of Mr. Handel.* According to *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 'this harmonious and elegant poem' rose far superior to those 'crude rhapsodies' so frequently laid at the feet of St. Cecilia. After praising several of Handel's works in glowing terms Langhorne devoted the following verses to *Samson*:

> When He of GAZA, blind, and sunk in Chains,
> On female Treachery looks greatly down,
> How the breast burns indignant! in thy strain,
> When sweet-voic'd Piety resigns to Heaven,
> Glows not each Bosom with the Flame of Virtue?[2]

Three years later appeared *An Examination of the Oratorios which have been Performed This Season at Covent-Garden Theatre.* In this detailed review of Handel's most popular choral works the anonymous

[1] *Remarks upon Church Musick. To which are added Several Observations Upon some of Mr. Handel's Oratorio's, And other Parts of his Works. By a Lover of Harmony* (Worcester, 1758), pp. 40–43.

[2] John Langhorne, *The Tears of Music. A Poem to the Memory of Mr. Handel* (London, 1760), pp. 15–16.

author, having analyzed *Messiah* 'with the most scrupulous minuteness,' proceeded to examine *Samson* 'with the same degree of accuracy,' in order to indicate 'how much is wanting to perfection, even in these two most finished performances of Mr. *Handel*, in the sacred and dramatic form.' His 'observations' on 'the *musical* composition' of *Samson* afford rich insight into critical opinion regarding Handel's favourite oratorio four years after the composer's death:

> The first chorus, *Awake the trumpet's lofty sound*, &c. is spirited and festal, but rather too long to be very pleasing.—The ensuing air, *Ye men of* Gaza, *hither bring*, &c. is light, and chearful: the words are well expressed by the music, and both suited to the supposed occasion.—Perhaps it is unnecessary to remark here, that a chorus, which is tedious in itself, becomes much more so by a repetition after this air.—The next song, *Loud as the thunder's awful voice*, &c. is very unworthy of *Handel*, in every part of it. Instead of a full and tremendous chorus, it is a *treble solo* . . . sung by a *child*, without expression, and without sublimity. In the song of *Torments, alas! are not confined*, &c. there is a noble union of the *grand* and *pathetic*: it is the genuine voice of fortitude in distress; and is every way perfect, except that the two last lines,
>
> *With pains intense opprest,*
> *That rob the soul of rest,*
>
> Are too often repeated, and somewhat overwrought.—But in the next song, *O mirror of our fickle state!* &c. there is a deplorable falling off, both from expression, and pathos. It is tedious, without being affecting; slow, instead of solemn; and a poor imitation . . . of *fallen so low*, in the third line, in the room of the accents of sorrow, and pity. It may serve, however, as a foil to the ensuing song, *Total eclipse! no sun, no moon!* &c. in which there is every thing which can please, or strike, but nothing disgusting, or blameable, except the *Ritornello*. The opening of the next chorus, *O first created beam! and thou, great word!* &c. is great, and expressive; but the remaining part is much inferior, from its being forced, and over-laboured. In this act we have likewise . . . four successive *solo songs* without the intervention of a single chorus to inspirit or sustain them. In *Manoah*'s song of
>
> *Thy glorious deeds inspir'd my tongue,*
> *While airs of joy from thence did flow:*
> *To sorrow now I tune my song,*
> *And set my harp to notes of woe;*
>
> *Handel* has entirely mistaken the subject. *Manoah* is in grief, and *lamenting* the difference between his present and former state: in this situation, he makes him sing a *jolly* song, which consists in an *imitation*, . . . and *division* . . . upon the words *joy* and *flow*, without the least regard to the sentiment.

The expression, however, of the two last lines, is excellent; and the music so admirably suited to the occasion, that it merits as high encomiums, as the other does censure. The next air,

Let not the God of Isr'el *sleep,*
Arise with dreadful sound, &c.

Ought, certainly, to have been a chorus . . .; in its present form, it neither pleases, nor strikes: and the divisions . . . upon *dreadful* debase it still lower. The chorus

Then shall they know that he whose name
Jehovah *is, alone,* &c.

Is set to a fine fugue. . . . There is little room for any expression in the words; and therefore all that the musician could do was, to give a good specimen of his abilities in his own department: and, considered in this light, the chorus is a fine one.

The song of

Joys that are pure, sincerely good,
Shall then o'ertake you as a flood:

Is only of the middling cast: but the concluding chorus is of a mixed nature, and contains, in the first part, something little above the common level; in the two last lines something which is superior to any genius but *Handel*'s. The words are,

Then round about the starry throne
Of him who ever rules alone,
Your heav'nly-guided soul shall climb;
Of all this earthly grossness quit,
With glory crown'd for ever sit,
And triumph over death, and thee, O time.

Perhaps the expression of *climbing round about* might justly be excepted against, but the general tenor of the four first lines is not very suitable to music; and therefore *Handel* can hardly be blamed for any defect in adapting them, except the unmeaning division . . . on *heav'nly-guided.* It would be difficult, however, to determine whether the remainder is more sublime, or pathetic; it is joyous without being light, and exulting without being overbearing: in a word, it is one of those distinguishing strokes of genius which can never be sufficiently admired, even in a crowd of imperfections; nor ever happily imitated by the highest efforts of art.

The first song of the second act, *Return, O God of hosts,* &c. is indeed noble, and as deservedly as universally applauded. Yet, fine as it is, *Handel* has not stopped here: the next chorus,

To dust his glory they would tread,
And number him among the dead;

Is an accumulation of the same passion and sentiment, the effect of which is as striking as the excellence is peculiar to the author. Afterwards the

song and choir combine their mutual powers, and, by the most pleasing mixture, sooth the soul into a tenderness of feeling, which it is more easy to conceive, than describe.—The next song of *Dalilah*'s,

With plaintive notes, and am'rous moan,
Thus coo's the turtle, left alone, &c.

Is only middling, both in the music, and expression. But *Samson*'s song, in answer to it,

Your charms to ruin led the way,
My sense deprav'd, &c.

Is very fine in every respect, except a little falling off in the two last lines, which, it must likewise be owned, are entirely unworthy of good music;

How great the curse, how hard my fate,
To pass life's sea with such a mate.

I must confess myself, however, afraid to remark either on the words or music of the next song.

My faith and truth, O Samson, *prove:*
But hear me, hear the voice of love.

It is a great *favourite*, and a great *favourite* of the *ladies* too. As a *favourite*, then, let the reader judge of it: all I shall blame in it is, the introduction of the *German* flute in the accompanyment, which is certainly an instrument by no means calculated for a large theatre, whatever effect it may have in a chamber performance.

The next song,

To fleeting pleasure make your court,
No moment lose, for life is short, &c.

Is in the ordinary stile of composers, but much below the dignity of *Handel*. The duet between *Samson* and *Dalilah*,

Dal. *Traitor to love,* &c.
Sam. *Traitress to love,* &c.

Is a musical scolding match, but is very unpolite, and very unnatural. It is certainly very rude to a lady to interrupt her in almost every note; and *Samson* sings a whole strain, after she has left off; whereas *Dalilah*, both as a *woman*, and a *wife*, ought, doubtless, in propriety, to have had the last word.—*Harapha*'s song of *Honour and arms scorn such a foe,* &c. is of the middling order. The division on *disdain* in the last line is bad, and the *da capo* tedious, and hurtful.—In the next duet,

Sam. *Go, baffled coward, go,*
Lest vengeance lay thee low:
In safety fly my wrath, with speed.
Har. *Presume not on thy God,*
Who under foot has trod
Thy strength, and thee, at greatest need.

We have different sentiments expressed by the same music; *Samson*

threatens, and *Harapha* gives ground to the same tune; but the partiality of the musician has given *Samson* the advantage, throughout the whole contest; and he is every where, at least an entire *bar* before his adversary. —The next chorus of *Israelites*,

Hear Jacob*'s God!* Jehovah *hear!*
O save us, prostrate at thy throne, &c.

Is very fine, and in the highest stile of the noblest church music. The chorus too of the *Philistines*,

To song and dance we give the day,
Which shews thy universal sway, &c.

Is animated, and joyous, and every way commendable, except in the *ritornello*. . . . The foundation of the concluding chorus is entirely absurd, tho' the music is so fine, and admirably adapted to the words, that almost any thing may be pardoned, where so many striking excellencies subsist. The words are,

Both choruses. *Fix'd in his everlasting seat,*
Chorus of *Israel.* Jehovah *rules the world in state.*
Chorus of *Dag.* priests. *Great* Dagon *rules the world in state;*
Both choruses. *His thunder roars, Heav'n shakes, and earth's aghast!*
The stars, with deep amaze,
Remain in stedfast gaze.
Chorus of *Israel.* Jehovah *is of Gods the first and last.*
Chorus of *Dag.* priests. *Great* Dagon *is of Gods the first and last.*

Now nothing can be more improbable, than that, in a *Philistine* city, the *Israelites* should be hymning their God with impunity on *Dagon*'s festival, and in so public a manner, that *Dagon*'s and *Jehovah*'s praise should be heard together, and agree so well as to make one exquisite piece of harmony. Yet mean as the foundation is, the superstructure is great; the expression is perfect; the conduct inimitable: nor could envy herself find a flaw in it, except the catches on the notes to the fifth and sixth lines.

The first chorus of the Third Act,

With thunder arm'd, great God arise;
Help, Lord, or Isr'el*'s champion dies,*

Is very indifferent, both in the imitation of thunder, and the expression of the sentiment. *Samson*'s next song,

Thus when the sun from's wat'ry bed,
All curtain'd with a cloudy red, &c.

Is good music; and the want of expression cannot be considered as a fault, because the words could hardly admit any. But if the words are in fault here, the music is as much so in the next air of *Micah*'s,

The holy one of Isr'el *be thy guide,*
The angel of thy birth stand by thy side,
To fame immortal go,

Heav'n bids thee strike the blow,
The holy one of Isr'el *is thy guide.*

The words are *solemn*, if not approaching to sublimity, but the music is very trifling upon the whole; and the divisions . . . on *fame*, *immortal*, and *holy one*, more particularly improper.

The following air and chorus of *Philistines*,

Great Dagon *has subdu'd our foe,*
And brought their boasted hero low, &c.

Is likewise very puerile, and insipid, and incumbered with a *ritornello*. . . . Little can be said in favour or dispraise of *Manoah*'s next air,

How willing my paternal love
The weight to share
Of filial care, &c.

the words and music equally want character. The *symphony* of *horror* and *confusion* is certainly fine, but the chorus of dying Philistines, which it is a prelude to, is a mixture of good and bad: The words are,

Hear us our God! O hear our cry
Death! ruin! fallen! no help is nigh.
O mercy heaven! we sink we die.

The second line is well expressed, but the music of the last is very inadequate to the subject.—The next air for *Micah*,

Ye sons of Israel now lament,
Your spear is broke, your bow's unbent,

Is truly affecting and tender, but the subject still rises in the succeeding chorus,

Weep Israel, weep a louder strain:

And is another instance of that accumulation of passion by which *Handel* is so eminently distinguished.—*Manoah*'s song at his son's interment is equally natural and fine. The words are,

Glorious hero may thy grave
Peace and honour ever have;

And the music is simple, soft, and pathetic. The chorus of virgins,

Bring the laurels, bring the bays,
Strew his hearse, and strew the ways:

The Air,

May every hero fall like thee
Thro' sorrow to felicity,

And the repetition of the chorus are all delicate height'nings of the same tender design, they all mutually reflect beauty upon each other, and all contribute to the general effect.—The next song of,

Let the bright seraphims in burning row
Their loud up-lifted angel trumpets blow.
Let the Cherubick host in tuneful choirs,

Touch their immortal harps with golden wires,[1]

Is so clearly calculated for the choral expression, that it is impossible for any air to come up to the subject. The last chorus

Let their celestial concerts all unite
To sound his praise in endless blaze of light,

Is full, and expressive; the melody is sublime, the harmony striking, and the whole movement a powerful transcript of the angelic choir it is intended to represent.

In his conclusion the anonymous critic extolled Handel as 'the Shakespeare of Music' and suggested that the 'striking excellencies' of *Messiah* and *Samson* outweigh the 'common defects' of these two 'capital' oratorios:

From this review of the *Messiah*, and *Samson*, every unprejudiced person will see how much is wanting to perfection in these greatest of Mr. *Handel*'s compositions, and what ample room there still remains both for correction and improvement. Perhaps the patrons of genius may think that too great pains have been taken to point out faults, and too small encomiums passed on *beauties*. Yet before they condemn the writer, let them consider, how easy it is to animadvert on common defects, how difficult it is to find words worthy of striking excellencies; let them consider how easy it would be to expose *Shakespear*'s *Puns, his Gibes and Gambols*, how difficult it would be for *panegyric* to follow him in the flight of genius. There is something more in this allusion than bare illustration, and the respective talents of these *heroes* of *Parnassus* bear as strong a resemblance as their errors and successes.—They are the darling sons of the sister sciences, poetry and music; they both have faults, but they are the faults of genius; they both abound in *beauties*, but they are beauties which art cannot reach. Criticism may blame both, but taste must admire them equally; and envy must praise their invention, even where she brands their judgment: in a word, tho' these sons of genius sometimes dazzle, sometimes scorch, their light will always be [p]referred to the frigid moon-shine of art and imitation.[2]

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[1] Note William Lisle Bowles' criticism of this famous aria: 'His music of "Let the bright Seraphim in burning row," is inadequate to the splendor of the expressions, and sublimity of the subject. In general, all epithets that *paint*, such as "*bright* Seraphim"—"*burning* row,"—are not so proper for music; as such words, while they animate Poetry, *impede* and *delay* the sentiment intended to be conveyed by music' (*The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.*, ed. William Lisle Bowles [London, 1806], I, 161).

[2] *An Examination of the Oratorios which have been Performed This Season at Covent-Garden Theatre* (London, 1763), pp. 26–36.

If Handel was frequently regarded as 'the Shakespeare of Music' he was no less frequently declared to be its Milton. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the German composer reigned absolute monarch of English music, and during that period he was repeatedly linked with Milton not only by musical historians but also by biographers and aestheticians.[1] 'I often regret that Milton and Handel were not contemporaries,' wrote Anna Seward in 1788; 'that the former knew not the delight of hearing his own poetry heightened as Handel has heightened it.'[2] To Miss Seward 'the Handel-harmonies of Milton' were notable particularly for their *sublimity*, and numerous critics of Georgian and Victorian England followed her lead in observing that Handel and Milton were united in their sublime treatment of epic themes from the English Bible. In grandeur and majesty Handel's 'mighty' choruses, like *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*, were generally acknowledged to be 'sublime.'[3] Writing in 1852, Horatio Townsend attributed to

[1] In 1784 Richard Mount-Edgcumbe heard the celebrated Mara sing 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' from Handel's *Messiah* at the old theatre of the Tuileries in Paris—'Musique de Handel, paroles de Milton [*sic*].' For Handel's place in English music during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries see my former study, *Handel's Messiah: A Touchstone of Taste* (New York, 1948). Note especially Chapter Five: 'All the King's Men' and Chapter Six: 'Opus Optimum.'

[2] *Letters*, II, 135. John Saville was to Miss Seward the most 'wonderful' singer in the world. 'Of all our public singers,' she continued, 'while many are masterly, many elegant, many astonishing, *he* only is sublime.' Elsewhere (I, 76) she declared that 'he alone, of all his brethren of the lyre, sings with impulses congenial to those with which Milton wrote and Handel composed.' See my former study, *Anna Seward: An Eighteenth-Century Handelian* (Williamsburg, 1947).

[3] 'MILTON is in poetry, what HANDEL is in music,' wrote C.T. in his essay 'On the Works of Handel,' *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, I (1818), 281. 'If we pursue our remarks still further, and consider some of his passages that are remarkable for loftiness and sublimity of style, and take for our subject the Hallelujah Chorus, we shall then find all that is grand and magnificent in lauding the glories of the Supreme Being.' Several critics applied to Handel the characterization of Milton by Dr. Johnson: 'The characteristick quality of his poem is sublimity. He sometimes descends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occasionally invest himself with grace; but his natural port is gigantick loftiness. He can please when pleasure is required; but it is his peculiar power to astonish. He seems to have been well acquainted with his own genius, and to know what it was that Nature had bestowed upon him more bountifully than upon others; the power of displaying the vast, illuminating the splendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful.' Eighteenth-century Handelians often resorted to Milton's lines to describe Handel's music. A favourite passage came from *L'Allegro* (ll. 142–144):

Handel 'a sublimity of genius equal to that of Milton' and assigned him a place 'in the same class of minds as Milton and Michael Angelo.'[1] Ten years later Dean Edward B. Ramsay delivered his *Two Lectures on the Genius of Handel*, in which he drew a lengthy and elaborate comparison between the two artists:

In looking out for a parallel with the great composer, I think Handel may very fitly be compared with a great name of which every countryman is proud. I mean the name of Milton, for Handel, I conceive, stands upon the same elevated platform as Milton. Like Milton, his highest powers are called forth in sacred song—like Milton, he rises to the highest point of sublimity when he is engaged with expressing the worship of the redeemed above. Grandeur, majesty, and elevation of thought are the distinguishing marks of both, and such is the character impressed on the productions of both—the music of Handel, the poetry of Milton. . . . From the works of each might be selected passages which in *sublimity* exceed all that have ever been produced; whilst in other departments of style they have been equalled or surpassed. Various authors have written historical and descriptive scenes superior to Milton. They have been superior to Milton in delineations of violent passions, in tragic representations of revenge, of grief, and of despair; but where his theme is connected with the presence and the praise of God, there are bursts and aspirations of the true sublime in Milton which have surpassed every writer, ancient and modern; and this is what we say of Handel. . . . Like Milton, he is always greatest on the greatest occasions. His genius rises with the loftiness of his theme, and if we would form a true estimate of the great power of Handel as a musical composer, if we would know the height of perfection which music itself can attain to, we must study his sublime choral compositions. He has power to touch the heart and has left many strains of melting tenderness and of deep pathos; but his

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The melting voice through mazes running;
Untwisting all the chains that ty
The hidden soul of harmony.

The title-page motto for Dr. Burney's *Account of the Musical Performances . . . in Commemoration of Handel* (London, 1785), was drawn from *Paradise Lost* (III, 344–349):

. . . All
The multitude of Angels with a shout
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heav'n rung
With Jubilee, and loud Hosanna's fill'd
Th' eternal Regions.

[1] Horatio Townsend, *An Account of the Visit of Handel to Dublin* (Dublin, 1852), pp. 21, 27.

triumph is in the sublime, in the anthems of seraphic praise, and of lofty adoration. There he *never* fails, and in these marvellous compositions we shall ever find new and increasing causes for admiration and delight. Indeed, we may speak of these productions of Handel's genius in the majestic language of a passage of Milton's own, which occurs in his prose works. He there describes a grand burst of praise as being a 'seven-fold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies.'[1]

In their rhetorical effusions upon Handel as a musical Milton, Victorians seldom failed to note the obvious parallel between Handel, Milton, and Homer. 'As Homer is to Greece,' wrote one enthusiast in 1894, 'as Milton is to England, so is Handel to music. The justice of the comparison few, we imagine, will care to dispute.'[2] In 1799 William Coxe had found it 'curious, though painful to a thinking mind, to trace the comparison between Homer, Milton, and Handel; all of them deprived of sight, and each exerting his faculties under that severe visitation, to the wonder of an admiring world.'[3] As Dr. Burney had already explained, 'HANDEL, late in life, like the great poets, Homer, and Milton, was afflicted with blindness.' The German composer was, he continued, 'always much disturbed and agitated by the similar circumstances of *Samson*, whenever the affecting air in that Oratorio of "*Total Eclipse, no Sun, no Moon*," &c. was performed.'[4] It is indeed striking that these three figures—Homer, Milton, and Handel—though utterly dissociated in time, in

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[1] Dean Edward B. Ramsay, *Two Lectures on the Genius of Handel and the Distinctive Character of his Sacred Compositions* (Edinburgh, 1862), pp. 119–123.

[2] Ella MacMahon, 'Handel,' *Belgravia*, LXXXIV (1894), 278.

[3] William Coxe, *Anecdotes of George Frederick Handel and John Christopher Smith* (London, 1799), p. 25. 'When [John Christopher] Smith played the organ at the Theatre, during the first year of Handel's blindness, Samson was performed, and [John] Beard sung, with great feeling,

"Total eclipse—no sun, no moon,
All dark amid the blaze of noon."—

The recollection that Handel had set this air to music, with the view of the blind composer then sitting by the organ, affected the audience so forcibly, that many persons were moved even to tears' (*Ibid.*, p. 45). As Mrs. Delany wrote on November 25, 1752: 'Poor Handel! how feelingly he must recollect the "*total eclipse*": I hear he has now been couched, and found some benefit from it' (*Autobiography and Correspondence*, III, 177).

[4] Charles Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances . . . in Commemoration of Handel* (London, 1785), pp. 29, 31.

temperament, and even in national origin, should be brought together for comparison by musical theorists of eighteenth-century England. Streatfeild has remarked that Handel's *Samson*, like Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, is his 'most personal' creation, 'that of which the subject appealed most strongly to him, and into which he put most of himself.'[1] Certainly it is extraordinary to find two geniuses of such singular talents thus collaborating on a theme so intimately associated with the personal experience of each. Furthermore, it is gratifying to observe that Milton's crowning achievement inspired the favourite work of the greatest composer England has produced. Little wonder, then, that eighteenth-century Englishmen found the 'united Labours and utmost Efforts' of Handel and Milton a source of pride and satisfaction, or that the Reverend John Langhorne, composing a poem 'to the Memory of Mr. Handel,' devoted his most eloquent verses to the fortunate union of their talents:

> . . . And Thou, sweet Queen,
> That nightly wrapt thy MILTON's hallow'd Ear
> In the soft Ecstacies of LYDIAN Airs,
> And since attun'd to HANDEL's high-wound Lyre
> The Lay by Thee suggested; could'st not Thou
> Soothe with thy sweet Song the grim Fury's Breast?
> Ah! no: from Thee too, heav'd the helpless Sigh,
> Thy fair Eyes floating in a mournful Tear,
> When MILTON died, and HANDEL breath'd no more.[2]

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[1] R. A. Streatfeild, *Handel* (London, 1909), p. 305. 'It is not so much that his own life was one long war against Philistines, or that he shared the hero's bodily affliction, though it is quite possible that at the time when he was writing *Samson* he may have had premonitory symptoms of his approaching blindness. The reason, I believe, at the risk of being thought fanciful, to lie at the roots of Handel's character. We know but little of Handel's private life, but everything that has been handed down with regard to it points to his having been a man of singular personal purity. In his time obscenity of language and unchastity of life were regarded as the most venial of sins, but from the typical faults of the age Handel was entirely free, and the disgust with which he regarded the sensuality that he saw rampant around him is, I think, to be read in *Samson* by those that have eyes to see.'

[2] *The Tears of Music. A Poem to the Memory of Mr. Handel* (London, 1760), p. 9.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Text of Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* as Set to Music by Jeremiah Clarke in 1697 *

I

'Twas at the Royal Feast, for *Persia* won,
By *Philip*'s Warlike Son:
Aloft in awful State
The God-like Heroe sate
On his Imperial Throne:
His valiant Peers were plac'd around;
Their Brows with Roses and with Myrtles bound.
(So shou'd Desert in Arms be Crown'd:)
The Lovely *Thais* by his side,
Sate like a blooming *Eastern* Bride
In Flow'r of Youth and Beauty's Pride.
Happy, happy, happy Pair!
None but the Brave
None but the Brave
None but the Brave deserves the Fair.

CHORUS

Happy, happy, happy Pair!
None but the Brave
None but the Brave
None but the Brave deserves the Fair.

II

Timotheus plac'd on high
Amid the tuneful Quire,

* *Alexander's Feast; or The Power of Musique. An Ode, In Honour of St. Cecilia's Day. By Mr. Dryden* (London, 1697).

With flying Fingers touch'd the Lyre:
The trembling Notes ascend the Sky,
And Heav'nly Joys inspire.
The Song began from *Jove*;
Who left his blissful Seats above,
(Such is the Pow'r of mighty Love.)
A Dragon's fiery Form bely'd the God:
Sublime on Radiant Spires He rode,
When He to fair *Olympia* press'd:
And while He sought her snowy Breast:
Then, round her slender Waste he curl'd,
And stamp'd an Image of himself, a Sov'raign of the World.
The list'ning Crowd admire the lofty Sound,
A present Deity, they shout around:
A present Deity the vaulted Roofs rebound.
With ravish'd Ears
The Monarch hears,
Assumes the God,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the Spheres.

CHORUS

With ravish'd Ears
The Monarch hears,
Assumes the God,
Affects to Nod,
And seems to shake the Spheres.

III

The Praise of *Bacchus* then, the sweet Musician sung;
Of *Bacchus* ever Fair, and ever Young:
The jolly God in Triumph comes;
Sound the Trumpets; beat the Drums;
Flush'd with a purple Grace
He shews his honest Face,
Now give the Hautboys breath; He comes, He comes.
Bacchus ever Fair and Young,
Drinking Joys did first ordain:

Bacchus Blessings are a Treasure;
Drinking is the Soldiers Pleasure;
Rich the Treasure,
Sweet the Pleasure;
Sweet is Pleasure after Pain.

CHORUS

Bacchus *Blessings are a Treasure,*
Drinking is the Soldier's Pleasure;
Rich the Treasure,
Sweet the Pleasure;
Sweet is Pleasure after Pain.

IV

Sooth'd with the Sound the King grew vain;
Fought all his Battails o'er again;
And thrice He routed all his Foes; and thrice He slew the slain.
The Master saw the Madness rise;
His glowing Cheeks, his ardent Eyes;
And while He Heav'n and Earth defy'd,
Chang'd his hand, and check'd his Pride.
He chose a Mournful Muse
Soft Pity to infuse:
He sung *Darius* Great and Good,
By too severe a Fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high Estate
And weltring in his Blood:
Deserted at his utmost Need,
By those his former Bounty fed:
On the bare Earth expos'd He lyes,
With not a Friend to close his Eyes.

With down-cast Looks the joyless Victor sate,
Revolveing in his alter'd Soul
The various Turns of Chance below;
And, now and then, a Sigh he stole;
And Tears began to flow.

CHORUS

Revolveing in his alter'd Soul
The various Turns of Chance below;
And, now and then, a Sigh he stole;
And Tears began to flow.

V

The Mighty Master smil'd to see
That Love was in the next Degree:
'Twas but a Kindred-Sound to move;
For Pity melts the Mind to Love.
Softly sweet, in *Lydian* Measures,
Soon He sooth'd his Soul to Pleasures.
War, he sung, is Toil and Trouble;
Honour but an empty Bubble.
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying,
If the World be worth thy Winning,
Think, O think, it worth Enjoying.
Lovely *Thais* sits beside thee,
Take the Good the Gods provide thee.

The Many rend the Skies, with loud Applause;
So Love was Crown'd, but Musique won the Cause.
The Prince, unable to conceal his Pain,
Gaz'd on the Fair
Who caus'd his Care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:
At length, with Love and Wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd Victor sunk upon her Breast.

CHORUS

The Prince, unable to conceal his Pain,
Gaz'd on the Fair
Who caus'd his Care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:
At length, with Love and Wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd Victor sunk upon her Breast.

VI

Now strike the Golden Lyre again:
A lowder yet, and yet a lowder Strain.
Break his Bands of Sleep asunder,
And rouze him, like a rattling Peal of Thunder.
Hark, hark, the horrid Sound
Has rais'd up his Head,
As awak'd from the Dead,
And amaz'd, he stares around.
Revenge, Revenge, *Timotheus* cries,
See the Furies arise!
See the Snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their Hair,
And the Sparkles that flash from their Eyes!
Behold a ghastly Band,
Each a Torch in his Hand!
Those are *Grecian* Ghosts, that in Battail were slayn,
And unbury'd remain
Inglorious on the Plain.
Give the Vengeance due
To the Valiant Crew.
Behold how they toss their Torches on high,
How they point to the *Persian* Abodes,
And glitt'ring Temples of their Hostile Gods!

The Princes applaud, with a furious Joy;
And the King seyz'd a Flambeau, with Zeal to destroy;
Thais led the Way,
To light him to his Prey,
And, like another *Hellen*, fir'd another *Troy*.

CHORUS

And the King seyz'd a Flambeau, with Zeal to destroy;
Thais *led the Way,*
To light him to his Prey,
And, like another Hellen, *fir'd another* Troy.

VII

Thus, long ago
'Ere heaving Bellows learn'd to blow,

While Organs yet were mute;
Timotheus, to his breathing Flute,
And sounding Lyre,
Cou'd swell the Soul to rage, or kindle soft Desire.
At last Divine *Cecilia* came,
Inventress of the Vocal Frame;
The sweet Enthusiast, from her Sacred Store,
Enlarg'd the former narrow Bounds,
And added Length to solemn Sounds,
With Nature's Mother-Wit, and Arts unknown before.
Let old *Timotheus* yield the Prize,
Or both divide the Crown;
He rais'd a Mortal to the Skies;
She drew an Angel down.

Grand CHORUS

At last, Divine Cecilia *came,*
Inventress of the Vocal Frame;
The Sweet Enthusiast, from her Sacred Store,
Enlarg'd the former narrow Bounds,
And added Length to solemn Sounds,
With Nature's Mother-Wit, and Arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus *yield the Prize,*
Or both divide the Crown;
He rais'd a Mortal to the Skies;
She drew an Angel down.

APPENDIX B

Text of Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* as Altered and Adapted by John Hughes and Set to Music by Thomas Clayton in 1711 *

I

RECITATIVE

'Twas at the Royal Feast, for *Persia* won
By *Philip*'s warlike Son;
Aloft in awful State,
The Godlike Hero sat
On his Imperial Throne:
His valiant Peers were plac'd around;
Their Brows with Roses and with Myrtles bound.

AIR

Lovely Thais *by his Side,*
Blooming sat in Beauty's Pride.
Happy, happy, happy Pair!
None but the Brave deserves the Fair!

II

RECITATIVE

Timotheus plac'd on high,
Amid the tuneful Quire,
With flying Fingers touch'd the Lyre;

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* 'Alexander's Feast: or, The Power of Musick. An Ode in Honour of St. Cecilia's Day. By Mr. Dryden. Alter'd for Musick by Mr. Hughes.' (In John Hughes, *Poems on Several Occasions* [London, 1735], II, 71–78).

Trembling the Notes ascend the Sky,
And Heav'nly Joys inspire.
The Song began from *Jove*,
Who left his blissful Seats above;
(Such is the Pow'r of mighty Love!)
A Dragon's fiery Form bely'd the God;
Sublime on radiant Spires he rode,
When he to fair *Olympia* press'd,
And while he sought her snowy Breast;
Then round her slender Waste he curl'd,
And stamp'd an Image of himself, a Sov'reign of the World.
The list'ning Croud adore the lofty Sound,
A present Deity, they shout around;
A present Deity, the echoing Roofs rebound!

AIR

With ravish'd Ears
The Monarch hears,
Assumes the God,
Affects the Nod,
And seems to shake the Spheres.

III

RECITATIVE

The Praise of *Bacchus* then the sweet Musician sung,
Of *Bacchus* ever Fair, and ever Young:
Behold he comes, the Victor God!
Flush'd with a purple Grace,
He shews his honest Face;
As when, by Tigers drawn, o'er *India*'s Plains he rode,
While loud with Conquest and with Wine,
His jolly Troop around him reel'd along,
And taught the vocal Skies to join
In this applauding Song.

DUETTO

Bacchus *ever gay and young,*
First did Drinking Joys ordain:

1. Bacchus' *Blessings are a Treasure;*
2. *Drinking is the Soldier's Pleasure:*
   1. *Rich the Treasure,*
   2. *Sweet the Pleasure!*

Both. *Sweet is Pleasure after Pain!*

IV

RECITATIVE

Fir'd with the Sound, the King grew vain;
Fought all his Battles o'er again,
And thrice he routed all his Foes, and thrice he slew the Slain.
The Master saw the Madness rise,
His glowing Cheeks, his ardent Eyes;
And while he Heav'n and Earth defy'd,
He chose a mournful Muse,
Soft Pity to infuse;
Then thus he chang'd his Song, and check'd his Pride.

AIR

See Darius *Great and Good,*
By too severe a Fate,
Fallen from his high Estate;
Behold his flowing Blood!
On Earth th' expiring Monarch lies,
With not a Friend to close his Eyes.

V

RECITATIVE

With downcast Looks the joyless Victor sat,
Revolving in his alter'd Soul
The various Turns of Chance below;
And, now and then, a Sigh he stole,
And Tears began to flow.
The mighty Master smil'd to see
That Love was in the next Degree:
'Twas but a Kindred-Sound to move;

For Pity melts the Mind to Love.
Softly sweet in *Lydian* Measures,
Soon he sooth'd his Soul to Pleasures.

AIR [With Flutes]

War is Toil and Trouble,
Honour is an airy Bubble,
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying,
If the World be worth thy winning,
Think, O think, it worth enjoying:
Lovely Thais *sits beside thee,*
Take the Good the Gods provide thee.

VI

RECITATIVE

The Prince, unable to conceal his Pain,
Gaz'd on the Fair,
Who caus'd his Care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:
At length, with Love and Wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd Victor sunk upon her Breast.

DUETTO

1. Phœbus, *Patron of the Lyre,*
2. Cupid, *God of soft Desire,*
1. Cupid, *God of soft Desire,*
2. Phœbus, *Patron of the Lyre,*
1 & 2. *How victorious are your Charms?*
1. *Crown'd with Conquest,*
2. *Full of Glory,*
1 & 2. *See a Monarch fall'n before ye,*
Chain'd in Beauty's clasping Arms!

VII

RECITATIVE

Now strike the golden Lyre again;
A louder yet, and yet a louder Strain:

Break his Bands of Sleep asunder,
Rouze him, like a rattling Peal of Thunder.
Hark, hark, the horrid Sound
Has rais'd up his Head,
As awak'd from the Dead,
And amaz'd he stares around!

AIR [With Symphonies]

Revenge, Revenge, Alecto *cries,*
See the Furies arise!
See the Snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their Hair,
And the Sparkles that flash from their Eyes!

VIII

RECITATIVE

Behold a ghastly Band,
Each a Torch in his Hand!
Those are *Grecian* Ghosts, that in Battle were slain,
And unbury'd remain,
Inglorious on the Plain.
Give the Vengeance due
To the valiant Crew.
Behold how they toss their Torches on high,
How they point to the *Persian* Abodes,
And glitt'ring Temples of their Hostile Gods!

AIR

The Princes applaud with a furious Joy;
And the King seiz'd a Flambeau, with Zeal to destroy;
Thais *led the way,*
To light him to his Prey,
And, like another Helen, *fir'd another* Troy.

IX

RECITATIVE

Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving Bellows learn'd to blow,

While Organs yet were mute;
Timotheus, to his breathing Flute,
And sounding Lyre,
Cou'd swell the Soul to Rage, or kindle soft Desire.
At last Divine CECILIA came,
Inventress of the vocal Frame;
The sweet Enthusiast, from her sacred Store,
Enlarg'd the former narrow Bounds,
And added Length to solemn Sounds,
With Nature's Mother-Wit, and Arts unknown before.

AIR

Let old Timotheus *yield the Prize,*
Or Both divide the Crown;
He rais'd a Mortal to the Skies,
She drew an Angel down.

APPENDIX C

Text of Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* as Altered and Adapted by Newburgh Hamilton and Set to Music by George Frideric Handel in 1736 *

A CANTATA,
perform'd at the Beginning of the Second Act

RECIT

Cecilia volgi un sguardo
Verso il suolo Britanno, e scorgerai
Che con sonori accenti
Rinova in questo giorno
Del nome tuo si caro
La gradita memoria,
Per celebrar della virtu la gloria.

ARIA

La virtute è un vero Nume
Del Mortal nel basso Mondo;
Chi si scosta dal suo lume
Va dell' ombre nel profondo
La virtute, Da Capo.

RECIT

Tu, Armonica Cecilia,
Che rapisti col Canto,

---

* *Alexander's Feast; or, The Power of Musick. An Ode Wrote in Honour of St. Cecilia, By Mr. Dryden. Set to Musick by Mr. Handel* (London, 1736).

Che incantasti col suono,
Fà pur che sia concesso
A questo stuol de tuoi seguaci egregi
Imitarne i tuoi pregi,
Perche un nobil natale
Si rende oscur senza virtute Uguale.

ARIA

Splenda l'alba in Oriente,
Cada il Sole in Occidente,
Virtu sempre essalterò;
Sia la lingua più Canora,
Sia la cetra più Sonora,
Oltre il ciel, oltre le stelle
Le sue belle
Alte glorie innalzerò.
Splenda l'alba, Da Capo.

RECIT

Carco sempre di gloria
Fù l'altero Tamigi,
Ed emulò nella virtù nel merto
I secoli passati;
E seppe unir con generoso core
Ad Armonica cetra un casto amore.

ARIA

Sei cara, bella, virtute ognor,
Scherzando alletti il cor.
E se ti unisci a un casto amor
Il pregio tuo è maggior.

Un puro ardor, un bel seren
Amor, virtù, Sol dà
E mille gioie prova il sen,
Perche? mà non si sà.
Sei cara, Da Capo.

RECIT

È ben degna di lode
Bella virtute e merta
Per se stessa gli applausi e ancor maggiore
Ella divienc in un virtuoso amore.

DUETTO

Trà amplessi innocenti,
Trà armonici accenti
Virtute sol gode.
Un candido affetto
Sincero diletto
Sol mertano lode
Trà amplessi, Da Capo.

ACT *the* FIRST

RECITATIVE

'Twas at the Royal Feast, for *Persia* won,
By *Philip*'s warlike Son:
Aloft, in awful State,
The God-like Heroe sate
On his Imperial Throne:
His valiant Peers were plac'd around;
Their Brows with Roses and with Myrtles bound:
So shou'd Desert in Arms be crown'd.
The Lovely *Thais* by his Side
Sate like a blooming Eastern Bride,
In Flow'r of Youth, and Beauty's Pride.

AIR

Happy, happy, happy Pair!
None but the Brave,
None but the Brave,
None but the Brave deserves the Fair.

CHORUS

Happy, happy, happy Pair!
None but the Brave,
None but the Brave,
None but the Brave deserve the Fair.

RECITATIVE

Timotheus plac'd on high,
Amid the tuneful Quire,
With flying Fingers touch'd the Lyre:
The trembling Notes ascend the Sky,
And heav'nly Joys inspire.

[*A Concerto here, for the Harp, Lute, Lyricord, and other Instruments.*]

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

The Song began from *Jove*,
Who left his blissful Seats above;
(Such is the Pow'r of mighty *Love*)
A Dragon's fiery Form bely'd the God;
Sublime, on radiant Spires he rode,
When he to fair *Olympia* press'd,
And while he sought her snowy Breast:
Then, round her slender Waist he curl'd,
And stamp'd an Image of Himself, a Sov'reign of the World.

CHORUS

The list'ning Crowd admire the lofty Sound,
A present Deity! they shout around;
A present Deity! the vaulted Roofs rebound.

AIR

With ravish'd Ears
The Monarch hears;
Assumes the God,
Affects to nod:
And seems to shake the Spheres.

CHORUS, *repeated*

The list'ning Crowd admire the lofty Sound,
A present Deity! they shout around;
A present Deity! the vaulted Roofs rebound.

RECITATIVE

The Praise of *Bacchus*, then, the sweet Musician sung;
Of *Bacchus*, ever Fair, and ever Young:
The jolly God in Triumph comes;
Sound the Trumpets, beat the Drums:
Flush'd with a Purple Grace,
He shews his honest Face;
Now give the Hautboys Breath; He comes! he comes!

AIR

Bacchus, *ever Fair, and Young,*
Drinking Joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' *Blessings are a Treasure,*
Drinking is the Soldier's Pleasure:
Rich the Treasure,
Sweet the Pleasure;
Sweet is Pleasure after Pain.

CHORUS

Bacchus' *Blessings are a Treasure,*
Drinking is the Soldier's Pleasure:
Rich the Treasure,
Sweet the Pleasure,
Sweet is Pleasure after Pain.

RECITATIVE

Sooth'd with the Sound, the King grew vain;
Fought all his Battles o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his Foes, and thrice he slew the Slain:
The Master saw the Madness rise,
His glowing Cheeks, his ardent Eyes;
And while he Heav'n and Earth defy'd,
Chang'd his Hand, and check'd his Pride.

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

He chose a mournful Muse,
Soft Pity to infuse.

AIR

He sung Darius *Great and Good,*
By too severe a Fate,
Fallen from his high Estate,
And welt'ring in his Blood:

Deserted at his utmost Need,
By those his former Bounty fed,
On the bare Earth expos'd he lies,
Without a Friend to close his Eyes.

He sung Darius *Great and Good,*
By too severe a Fate,
Fallen from his high Estate,
And welt'ring in his Blood.

RECITATIVE

With downcast Looks the joyless Victor sate,
Revolving in his alter'd Soul,
The various Turns of Chance below,
And, now and then, a Sigh he stole,
And Tears began to flow.

CHORUS

Behold Darius *Great and Good,*
Fallen, welt'ring in his Blood;
On the bare Earth expos'd he lies,
Without a Friend to close his Eyes.

RECITATIVE

The mighty Master smil'd to see
That Love was in the next Degree;
'Twas but a kindred Sound to move,
For Pity melts the Mind to Love:

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

Softly sweet, in *Lydian* Measures,
Soon he sooth'd his Soul to Pleasures.

AIR

War, he sung, is Toil and Trouble,
Honour but an empty Bubble:
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the World be worth thy winning,
Think, O think it worth enjoying:
Lovely Thais *sits beside thee,*
Take the Good the Gods provide thee.

War, he sung, is Toil and Trouble,
Honour but an empty Bubble:
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the World be worth thy winning,
Think, O think it worth enjoying.

CHORUS

The Many rend the Skies, with loud Applause;
So Love was crown'd, but Musick won the Cause.

AIR

The Prince, unable to conceal his Pain,
Gaz'd on the Fair,
Who caus'd his Care;
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:

At length with Love and Wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd Victor sunk upon her Breast.
The Prince, unable to conceal his Pain,
Gaz'd on the Fair,
Who caus'd his Care;
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again.

CHORUS, *repeated*

The Many rend the Skies with loud Applause;
So Love was crown'd, but Musick won the Cause.

ACT THE SECOND

Concerto for two Violins, Violoncello, *&c.*

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

Now strike the Golden Lyre again;
A louder yet—and yet a louder Strain:
Break his Bands of Sleep asunder,
And rouze him, like a rattling Peal of Thunder

CHORUS

Break his Bands of Sleep asunder,
And rouze him, like a rattling Peal of Thunder.

RECITATIVE

Hark, hark!—the horrid Sound
Has rais'd up his Head,
As awak'd from the Dead:
And amaz'd, he stares around.

AIR

Revenge, Revenge, Timotheus *cries,*
See the Furies arise,
See the Snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their Hair,
And the Sparkles that flash from their Eyes!

Behold a ghastly Band,
Each a Torch in his Hand!
Those are Grecian *Ghosts, that in Battle were slain*
And unbury'd, remain
Inglorious on the Plain.

Revenge, Revenge, Timotheus *cries,*
See the Furies arise,
See the Snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their Hair,
And the Sparkles that flash from their Eyes!

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

Give the Vengeance due
To the valiant Crew:
Behold how they toss their Torches on high,
How they point to the *Persian* Abodes,
And glitt'ring Temples of their hostile Gods!

AIR

The Princes applaud with a furious Joy;
And the King seiz'd a Flambeau, with Zeal to destroy.

AIR

Thais *led the way,*
To light him to his Prey;
And like another Helen, *fir'd another* Troy.

CHORUS

The Princes applaud with a furious Joy,
And the King seiz'd a Flambeau, with Zeal to destroy.
Thais *led the way*
To light him to his Prey;
And like another Helen, *fir'd another* Troy.

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

Thus long ago,
Ere heaving Bellows learn'd to blow,
While Organs yet were mute,
Timotheus to his breathing Flute,
And sounding Lyre,
Cou'd swell the Soul to Rage, or kindle soft Desire.

APPENDIX C

GRAND CHORUS

At last Divine Cecilia *came,*
Inventress of the Vocal Frame;
The sweet Enthusiast from her sacred Store,
Enlarg'd the former narrow Bounds,
And added Length to solemn Sounds,
With Nature's Mother-Wit, and Arts unknown before.

AIR, DUETT

Let old Timotheus *yield the Prize,*
Or both divide the Crown;
He rais'd a Mortal to the Skies,
She drew an Angel down.

CHORUS

Let old Timotheus *yield the Prize,*
Or both divide the Crown;
He rais'd a Mortal to the Skies,
She drew an Angel down.

[Concerto for the Organ and other Instruments]

ADDITIONAL CHORUS

Your Voices tune, and raise them high,
Till th' echo from the vaulted Sky
The blest Cecilia's *Name;*
Musick to Heav'n and Her we owe,
The greatest Blessing that's below;
Sound loudly then her Fame:

Let's imitate her Notes above,
And may this Evening ever prove,
Sacred to Harmony and Love.

APPENDIX D

Text of Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* as Set to Music by Giovanni Baptista Draghi in 1687 *

I

From Harmony, from heav'nly Harmony
This universal Frame began.
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring Atomes lay,
And cou'd not heave her Head,
The tuneful Voice was heard from high,
Arise ye more than dead.
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And MUSICK's pow'r obey.
From Harmony, from heav'nly Harmony
This Universal Frame began:
From Harmony to Harmony
Through all the compass of the Notes it ran,
The Diapason closing full in Man.

II

What Passion cannot MUSICK raise and quell!
When *Jubal* struck the corded Shell,
His list'ning Brethren stood around
And wond'ring, on their Faces fell
To worship that Celestial Sound.
Less than a God they thought there cou'd not dwell
Within the hollow of that Shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What Passion cannot MUSICK raise and quell!

---

1 *Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, 1687. *Written by John Dryden, Esq; and Compos'd by Mr. John Baptist Draghi* (London, 1687).

III

The TRUMPETS loud Clangor
Excites us to Arms
With shrill Notes of Anger
And mortal Alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundring DRUM
Cryes, heark the Foes come;
Charge, Charge, 'tis too late to retreat.

IV

The soft complaining FLUTE
In dying Notes discovers
The Woes of hopeless Lovers,
Whose Dirge is whisper'd by the warbling LUTE.

V

Sharp VIOLINS proclaim
Their jealous Pangs, and Desperation,
Fury, frantick Indignation,
Depth of Pains, and height of Passion,
For the fair, disdainful Dame.

VI

But oh! what Art can teach
What human Voice can reach
The sacred ORGANS praise?
Notes inspiring holy Love,
Notes that wing their heav'nly ways
To mend the Choires above.

VII

Orpheus cou'd lead the savage race;
And Trees unrooted left their place;
Sequacious of the Lyre:
But bright *CECILIA* rais'd the wonder high'r;
When to her ORGAN, vocal Breath was giv'n
An Angel heard, and straight appear'd
Mistaking Earth for Heaven.

A Song for St. Cecilia's Day (1687)

Grand CHORUS

As from the pow'r of sacred Lays
The Spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the bless'd above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling Pageant shall devour,
The TRUMPET *shall be heard on high,*
The Dead shall live, the Living die,
And MUSICK *shall untune the Sky.*

APPENDIX E

Text of Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* as Altered and Adapted by Newburgh Hamilton and Set to Music by George Frideric Handel in 1739 *

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony,
This Universal Frame began.
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring Atoms lay,
And cou'd not heave her Head,
The tuneful Voice was heard from high,
Arise ye more than dead.
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their Stations leap,
And MUSICK's Power obey.

CHORUS

From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony,
This Universal Frame began:
From Harmony to Harmony
Through all the Compass of the Notes it ran,
The Diapason closing full in Man.

AIR. I

What Passion cannot MUSICK *raise and quell!*
When Jubal *struck the corded Shell,*
His list'ning Brethren stood around

---

* *Alexander's Feast; or, The Power of Musick. An Ode. Wrote in Honour of St. Cecilia, And a Song for St. Cecilia's Day. Both written by Mr. Dryden. And Set to Musick by Mr. Handel* (London, 1739).

And wondring, on their Faces fell
To worship that Celestial Sound.
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
Within the Hollow of that Shell,
That spoke so sweetly, and so well.
What Passion cannot MUSICK *raise and quell!*

AIR. 2

The TRUMPET*'s loud Clangor,*
Excites us to Arms,
With shrill Notes of Anger,
And mortal Alarms.
The double, double, double Beat
Of the thundring DRUM
Cries, Hark! the Foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat.

AIR. 3

The soft complaining FLUTE
In dying Notes discovers
The Woes of hopeless Lovers,
Whose Dirge is whisper'd by the warbling LUTE.

AIR. 4

Sharp VIOLINS *proclaim*
Their jealous Pangs, and Desperation,
Fury, frantick Indignation,
Depth of Pains, and height of Passion,
For the fair, disdainful Dame.

AIR. 5

But, oh! what Art can teach,
What human Voice can reach
The sacred ORGAN*'s Praise?*
Notes inspiring holy Love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To join the Choirs above.

AIR. 6

Orpheus *could lead the Savage Race:*
And Trees, unrooted, left their Place;
Sequacious of the Lyre:

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

But bright *Cecilia* rais'd the Wonder high'r;
When to her Organ, Vocal Breath was giv'n,
An Angel heard, and straight appear'd,
Mistaking Earth for Heav'n.

GRAND CHORUS

As from the Pow'r of Sacred Lays
The Spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's Praise
To all the bless'd above;
So when the last and dreadful Hour
This crumbling Pageant shall devour,
The Trumpet *shall be heard on high,*
The Dead shall live, the Living die,
And Musick *shall untune the Sky.*

APPENDIX F

Text of Handel's *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato* as Altered and Adapted from Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* by Charles Jennens and Set to Music by George Frideric Handel in 1740 *

PART *the* FIRST

A New CONCERTO for several Instruments

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

L'ALLEGRO

Hence! loathed Melancholy,
Of *Cerberus*, and blackest Midnight born,
In *Stygian* Cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid Shapes, and Shrieks, and Sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth Cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous Wings,
And the Night-Raven sings:
There, under Ebon Shades, and low-brow'd Rocks,
As ragged as thy Locks,
In dark *Cimmerian* Desert ever dwell.

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

Il Pen. Hence! vain deluding Joys,
Dwell in some idle Brain,

---

* *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato. In Three Parts. Set to Musick by Mr. Handel* (London, 1740).

And Fancies fond with gaudy Shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay Motes that People the Sun-beams;
Or likest hovering Dreams,
The fickle Pensioners of *Morpheus'* Train.

AIR

L'All. *Come, thou Goddess, fair and free,*
In Heav'n yclep'd Euphrosyne;
And by Men Heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus *at a Birth,*
With two Sister-Graces more,
To Ivy-crowned Bacchus *bore.*

AIR

Il Pen. *Come rather, Goddess, sage and holy;*
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose Saintly Visage is too bright
To hit the Sense of Human Sight;
Thee bright-hair'd Vesta *long of Yore,*
To solitary Saturn *bore.*

AIR

L'All. *Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee*
Jest, and youthful Jollity;
Quips, and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,
Nods, and Becks, and wreathed Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's *Cheek,*
And love to live in Dimple sleek;
Sport, that wrinkled Care derides;
And Laughter, holding both his Sides.

CHORUS

Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee,
Jest, and youthful Jollity;
Sport, that wrinkled Care derides;
And Laughter, holding both his Sides.

AIR

Come, and trip it as you go,
On the light fantastick Toe.

CHORUS

Come, and trip it as you go,
On the light fantastick Toe.

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

Il Pen. Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, stedfast, and demure;
All in a Robe of darkest Grain
Flowing with majestick Train.

AIR

Come, but keep thy wonted State
With even Step, and musing Gaite;
And Looks commercing with the Skies,
Thy rapt Soul sitting in thine Eyes:

CHORUS

Join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with Gods doth diet.

RECITATIVE

L'All. Hence loathed Melancholy!
In dark *Cimmerian* Desart ever dwell.
But haste thee, *Mirth*, and bring with thee
The Mountain Nymph, sweet *Liberty*.

RECITATIVE

And if I give thee Honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy Crew.

AIR

Mirth, *admit me of thy Crew,*
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreproved Pleasures free:
To hear the Lark begin his Flight,
And singing, startle the dull Night:
Then to come, in spite of Sorrow,
And at my Window bid Good-morrow.

RECITATIVE

Il Pen. First, and chief, on golden Wing,
The Cherub *Contemplation* bring;
And the mute *Silence* hist along,
'Less *Philomel* will deign a Song;
In her sweetest, saddest Plight,
Smoothing the rugged Brow of Night.

AIR

Sweet Bird, that shun'st the Noise of Folly
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, Chauntress, oft' the Woods among,
I woo, to hear thy Even-Song.
Or, missing thee, I walk unseen,
On the dry smooth-shaven Green,
To behold the wand'ring Moon
Riding near her highest Noon.

RECITATIVE

L'All. If I give thee Honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy Crew.

AIR

Mirth, *admit me of thy Crew,*
To listen how the Hounds and Horn
Chearly rouze the slumb'ring Morn,
From the Side of some hoar Hill,
Thro' the high Wood echoing shrill.

AIR

Il. Pen. *Oft' on a Plat of rising Ground,*
I hear the far-off Curfeu sound,
Over some wide-water'd Shore,
Swinging slow, with sullen Roar:
Or if the Air will not permit,
Some still removed Place will fit,
Where glowing Embers, through the Room,
Teach Light to counterfeit a Gloom.

RECITATIVE

L'All. If I give thee Honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy Crew.

AIR

Let me wander, not unseen
By Hedge-row Elms, on Hillocks green,
There the Plowman near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrow'd Land;
And the Milkmaid singeth blithe;
And the Mower whets his Scythe;
And every Shepherd tells his Tale
Under the Hawthorn, in the Dale.

AIR

Or let the merry Bells ring round,
And the jocund Rebecks sound
To many a Youth, and many a Maid,
Dancing in the checquer'd Shade;

CHORUS

And Young and Old come forth to play,
On a Sunshine Holiday,
'Till the live-long Day-light fail.
Thus pass'd the Day, to bed they creep,
By whisp'ring Winds soon lull'd asleep.

APPENDIX F

PART *the* SECOND

A New CONCERTO for several Instruments

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

IL PENSEROSO

Hence, vain deluding Joys,
The Brood of Folly, without Father bred;
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixed Mind with all your Toys!
O! let my Lamp, at midnight Hour,
Be seen in some high lonely Tow'r,
Where I may oft' outwatch the *Bear*
With thrice-great *Hermes*, or unsphere
The Spirit of *Plato*, to unfold
What Worlds, or what vast Regions hold
Th' immortal Mind, that hath forsook
Her Mansion in this fleshly Nook.

AIR

But O! sad Virgin, that thy Power
Might raise Musæus *from his Bower;*
Or bid the Soul of Orpheus *sing*
Such Notes, as, warbled to the String,
Drew Iron Tears down Pluto's *Cheek,*
And made Hell grant what Love did seek.

RECITATIVE

Thus, *Night*, oft' see me in thy pale Career,
'Till unwelcome Morn appear.

RECITATIVE

L'All. Populous Cities please me then,
And the busy Humm of Men.

CHORUS

Populous Cities please us then,
And the busy Humm of Men;

Where Throngs of Knights, and Barons bold,
In Weeds of Peace high Triumphs hold;
With store of Ladies, whose bright Eyes
Rain influence, and judge the Prize
Of Wit, or Arms, while both contend
To win her Grace, whom all commend.

AIR

There let Hymen *oft' appear*
In Saffron Robe, with Taper clear,
And Pomp, and Feast, and Revelry,
With Masque, and antique Pageantry;
Such Sights as youthful Poets dream
On Summer-Eves, by haunted Stream.

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

Il Pen. Me, when the Sun begins to fling
His flaring Beams, me, Goddess, bring
To arched Walks of twilight Groves,
And Shadows brown, that *Sylvan* loves:
There, in close Covert, by some Brook,
Where no profaner Eye may look,

AIR

Hide me from Day's garish Eye,
While the Bee, with honey'd Thigh,
Which at her flow'ry Work doth sing,
And the Waters murmuring,
With such Concert as they keep
Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep:
And let some strange mysterious Dream
Wave at his Wings, in airy Stream
Of lively Portraiture display'd,
Softly on my Eyelids laid.
Then, as I wake, sweet Musick breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to Mortal's Good,
Or th' unseen Genius of the Wood.

AIR

L'All. *I'll to the well-trod Stage anon,*
If Johnson's *learned Sock be on;*
Or sweetest Shakespear, *Fancy's Child*
Warble his native Wood-notes wild.

AIR

L'All. *And ever against eating Cares,*
Lap me in soft Lydian *Airs:*
Sooth me with Immortal Verse,
Such as the meeting Soul may pierce
In Notes, with many a winding Bout
Of linked Sweetness long drawn out;
With wanton Heed, and giddy Cunning,
The melting Voice through Mazes running,
Untwisting all the Chains that tie
The hidden Soul of Harmony.

AIR

These Delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, *with Thee I mean to live.*

CHORUS

These Delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, *with Thee we mean to live.*

RECITATIVE

Il Pen. But let my due Feet never fail
To walk the studious Cloyster's Pale;
And love the high embowed Roof,
With antique Pillar's massy Proof;
And story'd Windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious Light.

CHORUS

There let the pealing Organ blow
To the full-voic'd Quire below,
In Service high, and Anthem clear;

SOLO

And let their Sweetness through mine Ear,
Dissolve me into Extasies,
And bring all Heav'n before mine Eyes.
These Pleasures, Melancholy, *give,*
And I with Thee will chuse to live.

CHORUS

These Pleasures, Melancholy, *give,*
And we with Thee will chuse to live.

PART *the* THIRD

A New CONCERTO on the Organ

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

IL MODERATO

Hence! boast not, ye Profane,
Of vainly fancy'd, little tasted Pleasure,
Pursu'd beyond all measure,
And by its own Excess transform'd to Pain.

AIR

Come, with native Lustre shine,
Moderation, *Grace Divine;*
Whom the wise God of Nature gave,
Mad Mortals from themselves to save.
Keep, as of old, the Middle-way,
Nor deeply sad, nor idly gay;
But still the same in Look and Gaite,
Easy, chearful, and sedate.

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

Sweet *Temp'rance* in thy Right-hand bear,
With her let rosy *Health* appear;

And in thy Left *Contentment* true,
Whom headlong *Passion* never knew.
Frugality by *Bounty*'s Side,
Fast Friends, tho' oft as Foes bely'd;
Chaste *Love*, by *Reason* led secure,
With Joys sincere, and Pleasures pure;
Happy Life, from Heav'n descending,
Crowds of smiling Years attending.

CHORUS

All this Company serene,
Join to fill thy beauteous Train.

AIR

Come, with gentle Hand restrain
Those who fondly court their Bane;
One Extreme with Caution shunning,
To another blindly running.
Kindly teach, how blest are they
Who Nature*'s equal Rules obey;*
Who safely steer two Rocks between,
And prudent keep the Golden Mean.

RECITATIVE

No more short Life they then will spend,
In straying farther from its End;
In frantick Mirth, and childish Play,
In Dance and Revels Night and Day;
Or else like lifeless Statues seeming,
Ever musing, moping, dreaming.

AIR

Each Action will derive new Grace
From Order, Measure, Time, and Place;
'Till Life, *the goodly Structure, rise*
In due Proportion to the Skies.

L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato (1740)

L'ALLEGRO *and* PENSEROSO

As steals the Morn upon the Night,
And melts the Shades away,
So Truth *does* Fancy's *Charm dissolve,*
And rising Reason *puts to flight*
The Fumes that did the Mind involve,
Restoring intellectual Day.

CHORUS

Thy Pleasures, Moderation, *give;*
In Them alone we truly live.

APPENDIX G

Text of Handel's *Samson* as Altered and Adapted from Milton's *Samson Agonistes* and Minor Poems by Newburgh Hamilton and Set to Music by George Frideric Handel in 1741 *

Dramatis Personæ

ISRAELITES

SAMSON.
MANOA, *Father to* Samson.
MICAH, *Friend to* Samson.
An Israelite *Officer.*
Chorus of Israelites.

PHILISTINES

DALILA, *Wife of* Samson.
HARAPHA, *a Giant.*
Chorus of Philistine *Women, and Priests of* Dagon.

SCENE, *Before the Prison in* Gaza

ACT I. SCENE I

SAMSON *blind, and in Chains. Chorus of the Priests of* Dagon *celebrating his Festival*

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* *Samson. An Oratorio. As it is Perform'd at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden. Alter'd and adapted to the Stage from the Samson Agonistes of John Milton. Set to Musick by George Frederick Handel* (London, 1743). In the present text, as in Hamilton's original arrangement, recitative which 'must be left out in the Performance' is enclosed in quotation marks.

SAMSON

This Day, a solemn Feast to *Dagon* held
Relieves me from my Task of servile Toil;
Unwillingly their Superstition yields
This Rest! To breathe Heav'n's Air fresh blowing, pure and sweet.

Chorus of the Priests of *Dagon*

Awake the Trumpet's lofty Sound;
The joyful sacred Festival comes round,
When Dagon, *King of all the Earth, is crown'd.*

AIR

Ye Men of Gaza, *hither bring*
The merry Pipe and pleasing String,
The solemn Hymn and chearful Song;
Be Dagon *prais'd by ev'ry Tongue.*

[Chorus repeated]

AIR

Loud as the Thunder's awful Voice,
In Notes of Triumph, Notes of Praise,
So high great Dagon's *Name we'll raise,*
That Heav'n and Earth may hear how we rejoice.

AIR

Then free from Sorrow, free from Thrall,
All blith and gay,
With Sports and Play
We'll celebrate his Festival.

[Chorus repeated]

Samson. Why by an Angel was my Birth foretold,
As in a fiery Column ascending

From off the Altar, in my Parents' Sight?
Why was my Nurture order'd and prescrib'd
As of a Person separate to God?
If I must die, betray'd and captiv'd thus,
The Scorn and Gaze of Foes!—O cruel Thought!
My Griefs find no Redress; they inward prey,
Like gangreen'd Wounds, immedicable grown.

AIR

Samson. *Torments, alas! are not confin'd*
To Heart, or Head, or Breast;
But will a secret Passage find
Into the very inmost Mind,
With Pains intense opprest,
That rob the Soul itself of Rest.

SCENE II

SAMSON, MICAH, *and Chorus of* Israelites

Micah. [*Apart.*] O change beyond Report, Thought, or Belief!
See how he lies with languish'd Head, unpropp'd!
Abandon'd! past all Hope! Can this be he?
Heroick *Samson*? whom no Strength of Man,
Nor Fury of the fiercest Beast cou'd quell?
Who tore the Lion, as the Lion tears the Kid;
Ran weaponless on Armies clad in Iron,
Useless the temper'd Steel, or Coat of Mail.

AIR

Micah. *O Mirrour of our fickle State!*
In Birth, in Strength, in Deeds how great!
From highest Glory fall'n so low,
Sunk in the deep Abyss of Woe.

Samson. [*Apart.*] Whom have I to complain of but myself,
Who Heav'n's great Trust cou'd not in Silence keep,
But weakly to a Woman must reveal it?
O glorious Strength! O Impotence of Mind!
But without Wisdom what does Strength avail?
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall.

God (when he gave it) hung it in my Hair,
To shew how slight the Gift. —But, Peace, my Soul,
Strength was my Bane, the Source of all my Woes,
Each told apart wou'd ask a Life to wail.
Micah. [To *Samson.*] Matchless in Might! once *Isr'el*'s Glory, now her Grief;
We come, thy Friends well known, to visit thee.
If Words have Charms to swage thy troubled Mind,
We'll pour their Balm into its fester'd Wounds.
Samson. Welcome, my Friends, Experience teaches now
How counterfeit the Coin of Friendship is,
That's only in the Superscription shewn.
In the warm Sun-shine of our prosp'rous Days
Friends swarm; but in the Winter of Adversity
Draw in their Heads; tho' sought, not to be found.
Micah. Which shall we first bewail, thy Bondage, or lost Sight?
'Prison within Prison! Inseparably dark!
'Thou art become the Dungeon of thyself!
'For ever now shut up with gloomy Night,
'Since inward Light puts forth no visual Beam.
Samson. O Loss of Sight! of thee I most complain;
O worse than Beggary, Old Age, or Chains!
My very soul in real Darkness dwells!
'Light, the prime Work of God, to me's extinct,
'And all her Objects of Delight annull'd,
'Which might have sooth'd my Griefs; the vilest Worm
'Excels me now; it creeps, but then it sees.
'Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half:
'Myself my Sepulchre, a moving Grave.
'Alive, yet bury'd, amidst all Ills of Life,
'Life in Captivity with inhuman Foes.

AIR

Samson. *Total Eclipse! no Sun, no Moon!*
All dark amidst the Blaze of Noon!
O glorious Light! No chearing Ray
To glad my Eyes with welcome Day:
Why thus depriv'd thy prime Decree,
Sun, Moon, and Stars are dark to me.

Micah. Since Light so necessary is to Life,
That in the Soul 'tis almost Life itself,

Why to the tender Eye is Sight confin'd?
So obvious, and so easy to be quench'd;
Why not, as Feeling, thro' all Parts diffus'd,
That we might look at will thro' ev'ry Pore?

CHORUS

O first created Beam! and thou great Word!
Let there be Light! and Light was over all,
One heav'nly Blaze shone round this earthly Ball.
To thy dark Servant Life by Light afford.

Samson. You see, my Friends, how Woes inclose me round;
But, had I Sight, how cou'd I heave my Head
For Shame? Thus for a Word, or Tear, divulge
To a false Woman God's most secret Gift,
And then be sung, or proverb'd for a Fool.
Micah. The wisest Men have err'd, and been deceiv'd
By Female Arts. Deject not then thyself,
Who hast of Griefs a Load. Yet Men will ask,
Why did not *Samson* rather wed at home?
In his own Tribe are fairer, or as fair.
Samson. O that I had! Alas, fond Wish! too late.
That specious Monster! *Dalilah!* my Snare!
Myself the Cause, who vanquish'd by her Tears,
Gave up my Fort of Silence to a Woman.
Micah. Here comes my reverend Sire, old *Manoa,*
With careful Steps, and Locks as white as Down.
Samson. Alas! another Grief that Name awakes.

SCENE III

SAMSON, MICAH, MANOA, *and the Chorus of* Israelites

Manoa. Brethren, and Men of *Dan,* say, where's my Son?
Samson, fond *Isr'el*'s Boast? inform my Age.
Micah. As signal now in low dejected State,
As in the height of Pow'r: See where he lies.
Manoa. O miserable Change! Is this the Man
Renown'd afar, the Dread of *Isr'el*'s Foes?
Who with an Angel's Strength their Armies duell'd,
Himself an Army; now unequal Match
To guard his Breast against the Coward's Spear.

Micah. O ever-failing Trust in mortal Strength!
And O what not deceivable and vain in Man!

AIR

Micah. *God of our Fathers, what is Man,*
So proud, so vain, so great in Story?
His Fame, a Blast; his Life, a Span;
A Bubble at the height of Glory:
Oft' he that's most exalted high,
Unseemly falls in Human Eye.

Manoa. The Good we wish for, often proves our Bane;
I pray'd for Children, and I gain'd a Son,
And such a Son, as all Men hail'd me happy;
But who'd be now a Father in my Stead?
The Blessing drew a Scorpion's Tail behind.
This Plant (select and sacred for a while,
The Miracle of all!) was in one Hour
Ensnar'd, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
His Foes Derision, Captive, poor and blind.

AIR

Manoa. *Thy glorious Deeds inspir'd my Tongue,*
Whilst Airs of Joy from thence did flow;
To Sorrow now I tune my Song,
And set my Harp to Notes of Woe.
'The warlike Cornet spoke aloud
'Your Triumphs to the shouting Crowd;
'Now solemn Musick plays its Part,
'And shews the Anguish of my Heart.

Samson. Justly these Evils have befall'n thy Son;
Sole Author I, sole Cause, who have profan'd
The Mysteries of God; by me betray'd
To faithless Parlies, feminine Assaults:
To the false Fair I yielded all my Heart,
So far Effeminacy held me yok'd
Her Slave. O foul Indignity! O Blot
To Honour and to Arms!
Manoa. Worse yet remains;
This Day they celebrate with Pomps and Sports,

And sacrifice to *Dagon*, Idol God!
Who gave thee Bound and Blind into their Hands;
Thus is he magnify'd; the Living God
Blasphem'd, and scorn'd by that idolatrous Rout.
Samson. This have I done, this Pomp, this Honour brought
To Idol *Dagon*; but to *Isr'el* Shame;
And our true God Disgrace. My Griefs for this,
Forbid mine Eye to close, or Thoughts to rest:
But now the Strife shall end; me overthrown,
Dagon presumes to enter Lists with God;
Who, thus provok'd, will not connive, but rouze
His Fury soon, and his great Name assert.
Dagon shall stoop, ere long be quite despoil'd
Of all those boasted Trophies won on me.

AIR

Samson. *Why does the God of* Isr'el *sleep?*
Arise with dreadful Sound,
And Clouds encompass'd round,
Then shall the Heathen hear thy Thunder deep.
The Tempest of thy Wrath now raise,
In Whirlwind them pursue,
Full fraught with Vengeance due,
'Till Shame and Trouble all thy Foes shall seize.

Micah. There lies our Hope; true Prophet may'st thou be,
That God may vindicate his glorious Name;
Nor let us doubt whether God is Lord, or *Dagon.*

CHORUS

Then shall they know, that He whose Name
Jehovah *is alone,*
O'er all the Earth but one,
Was ever the most High, and still the same.

Manoa. For thee, my dearest Son, must thou mean while
Lie thus neglected, in this loathsome Plight?
Samson. It shou'd be so, to expiate my Crime,
If possible: Shameful Garrulity!
Had I reveal'd the Secret of a Friend,
Most heinous that: But impiously to blab

God's Counsel—is a Sin without a Name.
Manoa. Be for thy Fault contrite: But, O my Son,
To high Disposal leave the Forfeit due;
God may relent, and quit thee all his Debt;
Reject not then the offer'd Means of Life;
Already have I treated with some Lords
To ransom thee: Revenge is sated now,
To see thee thus, who cannot harm them more.
Samson. Why shou'd I live? 'In youthful Courage once,
'And Deeds of Strength, all Mortals I excell'd;
'Dreaded I walk'd o'er hostile Ground, fearless myself,
"Till, swoln with Pride, I fell into the Pit
'Of fair, fallacious Looks; now sham'd and quell'd,
'In what can I be useful to my Friends?
'But loiter idly on the houshold Hearth,
'A burd'nous Drone, to Visitants a Gaze,
"Till Length of Years, and sedentary Numbness,
'Shall craze my Limbs; vain Monuments of Strength!
Manoa. 'Better at home lie bed-rid, unemploy'd,
'Than with thy Strength serve them thou shou'dst annoy;
'God may enlighten yet thy darken'd Eyes,
'Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast.
Samson. Soon shall these Orbs to double Darkness yield,
My genial Spirits droop, my Hopes are flat;
Nature in me seems weary of herself;
My Race of Glory run, and Race of Shame;
Death invocated oft' shall end my Pains,
And lay me gently down with them that rest.
Micah. Then long Eternity shall greet your Bliss;
No more of earthly Joys, so false and vain!

AIR

Micah. *Joys that are pure, sincerely good,*
Shall then o'ertake you as a Flood:
Where Truth and Peace do ever shine,
With Love that's perfectly divine.

CHORUS

Then round about the starry Throne
Of Him who ever rules alone,
Your heav'nly-guided Soul shall climb;

Of all this earthy Grossness quit,
With Glory crown'd, for ever sit,
And triumph over Death, and Thee, O Time.

ACT II. SCENE I

SAMSON, MICAH, MANOA, *and the Chorus of* Israelites

MANOA

Despair not thus; you once were God's Delight;
His destin'd from the Womb; by him led on
To Deeds above the Nerve of mortal Arm;
Under his Eye abstemious you grew up;
Nor did the dancing Ruby, sparkling, out-pour'd,
Allure you from the cool crystalline Stream.
Samson. Where'er the liquid Brook or Fountain flow'd
I drank, nor envy'd Man the chearing Grape;
But what avail'd this Temp'rance not compleat,
Against another Object more enticing?
I laid my Strength in Lust's lascivious Lap.
Manoa. Trust yet in God; the Father's timely Care
Shall prosecute the means to free thee hence;
Mean time, all healing Words from these thy Friends admit.

AIR

Manoa. *Just are the Ways of God to Man,*
Let none his secret Actions scan;
For all is best, tho' oft' we doubt
Of what his Wisdom brings about:
Still his unsearchable Dispose
Blesses the Righteous in the close.

Samson. My Evils hopeless are; one Pray'r remains,
A speedy Death, to close my Miseries.
Micah. Relieve thy Champion, Image of thy Strength;
And turn his Labours to a peaceful End.

AIR

Micah. *Return, O God of Hosts! behold*
Thy Servant in Distress,
His mighty Griefs redress,
Nor by the Heathen be they told.

CHORUS

To Dust his Glory they wou'd tread,
And number him amongst the Dead.

SCENE II

SAMSON, MICAH, DALILA, *Chorus of* Israelites, *and Virgins attending* DALILA

Micah. But who is this, that so bedeck'd and gay,
Comes this way sailing like a stately Ship,
With all her Streamers waving in the Winds;
An odorous Perfume her Harbinger,
A Damsel Train behind? 'Tis *Dalila*, thy Wife.
Samson. My Wife! my Trait'ress: Let her not come near me.
Micah. She stands, and eyes thee fix'd, with Head declin'd,
(Like a fair Flow'r surcharg'd with Dew) she weeps;
Her Words address'd to thee seem Tears dissolv'd,
Wetting the Borders of her silken Vail.
Dalila. With doubtful Feet, and wav'ring Resolution,
I come, O *Samson*! dreading thy Displeasure;
But Conjugal Affection led me on
Prevailing over Fear and tim'rous Doubt;
Glad, if in ought, my Help or Love cou'd serve
To expiate my rash, unthought Misdeed.
Samson. Out, thou *Hyæna!* 'twas Malice brought thee here;
These are the Arts of Women false, like thee,
To break all Vows, repent, deceive, submit;
Then, with instructed Skill, again transgress:
The wisest Men have met such bosom Snakes,
Beguil'd like me, to Ages an Example.
Dalila. I wou'd not lessen my Offence, yet beg
To weigh it by itself; what is it then?
But Curiosity, a small Female Fault,
Greedy of Secrets, but to publish them.
Why wou'd you trust a Woman's Frailty then?
And to her Importunity your Strength?
A mutual Weakness mutual Pardon claims.
Samson. How cunningly the Sorceress displays
Her own Transgressions, to upbraid me mine?
I to myself was false, ere thou to me;
Bitter Reproach! but true. The Pardon then
I to my Folly give, take thou to thine.

AIR

With plaintive Notes and am'rous Moan
Thus coos the Turtle left alone;
Like her, averse to each Delight,
She wears the tedious widow'd Night:
But when her absent Mate returns,
With doubled Raptures then she burns.

Dalila. Alas! th'Event was worse than I foresaw:
Fearless at home of Partners in my Love,
'Twas Jealousy did prompt to keep you there
Both Day and Night, Love's Pris'ner, wholly mine.
Samson. Did Love constrain thee? No, 'twas raging Lust.
Love seeks for Love, thy Treason sought my Hate.
In vain you strive to cover Shame with Shame;
Once join'd to me, tho' judg'd your Country's Foe,
Parents, and all, were in the Husband lost.

AIR

Your Charms to Ruin led the way,
My Sense deprav'd,
My Strength enslav'd,
As I did love, you did betray.
How great the Curse! How hard my Fate
To pass Life's Sea with such a Mate!

Dalila. Forgive what's done, nor think of what's past Cure;
From forth this Prison-House come home to me,
Where with redoubled Love, and nursing Care,
(To me glad Office!) my Virgins and myself
Shall tend about thee to extremest Age.

Dalila. *My Faith and Truth, O* Samson, *prove;*
But hear me, hear the Voice of Love;
With Love no Mortal can be cloy'd,
All Happiness is Love enjoy'd.

Chorus of Virgins

Her Faith and Truth, O Samson, *prove,*
But hear her, hear the Voice of Love.

AIR

Dalila. *To fleeting Pleasures make your Court,*
No Moment lose, for Life is short;
The present Now's our only Time,
The missing That our only Crime.
How charming is domestick Ease!
A thousand ways I'll strive to please:
Life is not lost, tho' lost your Sight,
Let other Senses taste Delight.

Chorus repeated

Her Faith and Truth, O Samson, *prove,*
But hear her, hear the Voice of Love.

Samson. Ne'er think of that; I know thy warbling Charms,
Thy Trains, thy Wiles, and fair enchanted Cup;
Their Force is null'd; where once I have been caught,
I shun the Snare; these Chains, this Prison-House
I count the House of Liberty to thine.
Dalila. Let me approach at least, and touch thy Hand.
Samson. Not for thy Life, lest fierce Rememb'rance wake
My sudden Rage, to tear thee Limb from Limb:
At Distance I forgive; depart with that:
Now triumph in thy Falshood; so farewel.
Dalila. Thou art more deaf to Pray'rs than Winds or Seas.
Thy Anger rages an eternal Tempest;
Why should I humbly sue for Peace, thus scorn'd,
With Infamy upon my Name denounc'd?
When in this Land I ever shall be held
The first of Women-kind, Living or Dead.
My Praises shall be sung at solemn Feasts,
Who sav'd my Country from a fierce Destroyer.

DUET

Dalila. *Traitor to Love, I'll sue no more*
For Pardon scorn'd, your Threats give o'er.
Samson. *Traitress to Love, I'll hear no more*
The Charmer's Voice, your Arts give o'er.

SCENE III

SAMSON, MICAH, *and the Chorus of* Israelites

Micah. She's gone, a Serpent manifest, her Sting
Discover'd in the end.
Samson. So let her go;
God sent her here to aggravate my Folly.

AIR

It is not Virtue, Valour, Wit,
Or comeliness of Grace,
That Woman's Love can truly hit,
Or in her Heart claim Place.

Still wav'ring where their Choice to fix,
Too oft' they choose the Wrong;
So much Self-love does rule the Sex,
They nothing else love long.

Samson. Favour'd of Heav'n is he who finds one true;
How rarely found!—his way to Peace is smooth.

CHORUS

To Man God's universal Law
Gave Pow'r to keep the Wife in Awe;
Thus shall his Life be ne'er dismay'd,
By Female Usurpation sway'd.

SCENE IV

SAMSON, MICAH, HARAPHA, *Chorus of* Israelites,
and Priests of Dagon

Micah. No Words of Peace, no Voice-enchanting Fear,
A rougher Tongue expect.—Here's *Harapha*,
I know him by his Stride, and haughty Look.
Harapha. I come not, *Samson*, to condole thy Chance;
I am of *Gath*, Men call me *Harapha*;
Thou know'st me now; of thy prodigious Might
Much have I heard, incredible to me!

Nor less displeas'd, that never in the Field
We met, to try each other's Deeds of Strength:
I'd see if thy Appearance answers loud Report.
Samson. The Way to know, were not to see, but taste.
Harapha. Ha! dost thou then already single me?
I thought that Labour, and thy Chains, had tam'd thee.
Had Fortune brought me to that Field of Death,
Where thou wrought'st Wonders with an Ass's Jaw,
I'd left thy Carcase where the Ass lay thrown.
Samson. Boast not of what thou would'st have done, but do.
Harapha. The Honour certain to have won from thee
I lose, prevented by thy Eyes put out;
To combat with a blind Man, I disdain.

AIR

Honour and Arms scorn such a Foe,
Tho' I cou'd end thee at a Blow;
Poor Victory,
To conquer thee,
Or glory in thy Overthrow:
Vanquish a Slave that is half slain!
So mean a Triumph I disdain.

Samson. 'Who cou'd withstand me, single and unarm'd,
''Till a vile Woman, breaking Marriage Vows,
'Did circumvent me?—But now put on your Arms,
'Then take for Spear your weighty Weaver's Beam,
'And come within my Reach, this oaken Staff
'Shall raise such Outcries on thy clatter'd Iron,
'Thou oft' shall wish thyself at *Gath* again.
Harapha. 'Thou durst not thus disparage glorious Arms,
'The Hero's Ornament, had not some Spells
'Of curs'd Magician charm'd thee into Strength,
'Thou feign'st at Birth was giv'n thee in thy Hair.
Samson. 'To thy *Philistine* Race I leave th'Enchanters Arts;
'To *Isr'el*'s Sons forbid. At my Nativity
'Thro' all my Limbs was heav'nly Strength diffus'd,
'Whilst (as I vow'd) these Locks unshorn I kept.

AIR

Samson. *My Strength is from the living God,*
By Heav'n free-gifted at my Birth,

To quell the Mighty of the Earth,
And prove the brutal Tyrant's Rod:
But to the Righteous Peace and Rest,
With Liberty to all opprest.

Harapha. 'Thy God regards thee not, has giv'n thee up
'A Prey to us, to grind among our Slaves.
Samson. 'This I deserve, and more; yet Pardon hope
'From him whose Ear and Eye are ever open
'To the Suppliant's Cry; in Confidence whereof
'I here defy thee to the deadly Proof.
Harapha. With thee? a Man condemn'd! a Slave enroll'd!
No worthy Match to stain the Warrior's Sword.
Samson. Cam'st thou for this, vain Boaster? yet take heed;
My Heels are fetter'd, but my Hands are free.
Thou Bulk, of Spirit void, I once again,
Blind, and in Chains, provoke thee to the Fight.
Harapha. O *Dagon*! can I hear this Insolence,
To me unus'd, not rend'ring instant Death?

DUET. Samson *and* Harapha

Samson. *Go, baffled Coward, go,*
Lest Vengeance lay thee low;
In Safety fly my Wrath with Speed.
Harapha. *Presume not on thy God,*
Who under Foot has trod
Thy Strength and Thee, at greatest need.
Both. *Go, baffled Coward, go,* &c.
Presume not on thy God, &c.

Micah. Here lie the Proof: —if *Dagon* be thy God,
With high Devotion invocate his Aid,
His Glory is concern'd. Let him dissolve
Those magick Spells that gave our Hero Strength,
Then know whose God is God; *Dagon*, of mortal Make,
Or that Great One whom *Abra'm*'s Sons adore.

Chorus of *Israelites*

Hear, Jacob'*s God!* Jehovah, *hear!*
O save us, prostrate at thy Throne,
Isr'el *depends on thee alone;*
Save us, and shew that thou art near.

Harapha. Dagon, arise! attend thy sacred Feast;
Thy Honour calls, this Day admits no Rest.

Chorus of the Priests of *Dagon*

To Song and Dance we give the Day
Which shews thy universal Sway.
Protect us by thy mighty Hand,
And sweep this Race from out the Land.

Chorus of both

Both Chorus's. *Fix'd in his everlasting Seat.*
Chorus of *Israelites.* Jehovah *rules the World in State.*
Chorus Priests of *Dagon.* *Great* Dagon *rules the World in State.*
Both. *His Thunder roars, Heav'n shakes, and Earth's aghast,*
The Stars, with deep Amaze,
Remain in stedfast Gaze.
Chorus of *Israelites.* Jehovah *is of Gods the first and last.*
Chorus Priests of *Dagon.* *Great* Dagon *is of Gods the first and last.*

ACT III. SCENE I

SAMSON, MICAH, HARAPHA, *and Chorus of* Israelites

MICAH

More Trouble is behind, for *Harapha*
Comes on amain, Speed in his Steps and Look.
Samson. I fear him not, nor all his Giant Brood.
Harapha. Samson, to thee our Lords thus bid me say:
This Day to *Dagon* we do sacrifice
With Triumph, Pomp, and Games; we know thy Strength
Surpasses Human Race; come then, and shew
Some publick Proof to grace this solemn Feast.
Samson. I am an *Hebrew*, and our Law forbids
My Presence at their vain religious Rites.
Harapha. 'This Answer will not please; rise then, with Speed.
Samson. 'Have they not Artists, Wrestlers, Dancers, Anticks,
'That I'm pick'd out, a Slave o'er-labour'd thus,
'To make them Sport with blind Activity.
Harapha. This Answer will offend; regard thyself.

Samson. Myself! my Conscience and internal Peace!
Am I so broke with Servitude, to yield
To such absurd Commands? To be their Fool,
And play before their God? —I will not come.
Harapha. My Message, giv'n with Speed, brooks no Delay.

AIR *for* Harapha

Presuming Slave! to move their Wrath;
For Mercy sue,
Or Vengeance due
Dooms in one fatal Word thy Death:
Consider, ere it be too late,
To ward th' unerring Shaft of Fate.

Micah. Reflect then, *Samson,* Matters now are strain'd
Up to the Height, whether to hold or break.
He's gone, whose Malice may inflame the Lords.
Samson. Shall I abuse this consecrated Gift
Of Strength, again returning with my Hair,
By vaunting it in honour to their God,
And prostituting holy things to Idols?
Micah. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my Reach;
'Tis Heav'n alone can save both us and thee.

Chorus of *Israelites*

With Thunder arm'd, great God arise;
Help, Lord, or Isr'el's *Champion dies:*
To thy Protection this thy Servant take,
And save, O save us, for thy Servant's sake.
With Thunder arm'd, great God arise;
Help, Lord, or Isr'el's *Champion dies.*

Samson. Be of good Courage, I begin to feel
Some inward Motions, which do bid me go.
'Yet nothing will I do to stain my Vow,
'Or bring our Law Disgrace. Perhaps this Day
'May be remark'd for some great Act, or else
'Be of my Days the last; Heav'n knows th' Event.
Micah. In time thou hast resolv'd, again he comes.
Harapha. Samson, this second Summons send our Lords:
Art thou our Captive, Slave, and publick Drudge,
Yet dare dispute thy coming when we send?

Haste thee at once, or we shall Engines find
To move thee, tho' thou wert a solid Rock.
Samson. Vain were their Art if try'd; I yield to go,
Not thro' your Streets be like a wild Beast trail'd.
Harapha. You thus may win the Lords to set you free.
Samson. In nothing I'll comply that's scandalous,
Or sinful by our Law. —Brethren, farewel;
Your kind Attendance now, I pray, forbear,
Lest it offend to see me girt with Friends.
Expect of me you'll nothing hear impure,
Unworthy God, my Nation, or myself.
Micah. So may'st thou act as serves his Glory best.
Samson. Let but that Spirit (which first rush'd on me
In the Camp of *Dan*) inspire me at my Need,
Then shall I make *Jehovah*'s Glory known
Their Idol Gods shall from his Presence fly,
Scatter'd like Sheep before the God of Hosts.

AIR *for* Samson

Thus when the Sun from's watry Bed,
All curtain'd with a cloudy Red,
Pillows his Chin upon an orient Wave;
The wand'ring Shadows ghastly pale
All troop to their infernal Jail,
Each fetter'd Ghost slips to his sev'ral Grave.

Micah. With Might endu'd above the Sons of Men,
Swift as the Light'ning's Glance his Errand execute,
And spread his Name amongst the Heathen round.

AIR *for* Micah

The Holy One of Isr'el *be thy Guide,*
The Angel of thy Birth stand by thy Side:
To Fame immortal go,
Heav'n bids thee strike the Blow:
The Holy One of Isr'el *is thy Guide.*

Chorus of *Israelites*

To Fame immortal go,
Heav'n bids thee strike the Blow:
The Holy One of Isr'el *is thy Guide.*

SCENE II

MICAH, MANOA, *and Chorus of* Israelites

Micah. Old *Manoa*, with youthful Steps, makes haste
To find his Son, or bring us some glad News.
Manoa. I come, my Brethren, not to seek my Son,
Who at the Feast does play before the Lords;
But give you Part with me, what Hopes I have
To work his Liberty.
Micah. 'Say, Reverend Sire,
'"Twill much rejoice us to partake that Hope.
Manoa. 'I have attempted, one by one, the Lords;
'Some I found harsh, set on Revenge in Spite;
'Others more moderate, their Aim Reward;
'The most confess'd they were enough reveng'd,
'If some convenient Ransom was propos'd.

AIR *and Chorus of* Philistines *at a Distance*

Great Dagon *has subdu'd our Foe,*
And brought their boasted Hero low:
Sound out his Pow'r in Notes divine,
Praise him with Mirth, high Chear, and Wine.

Manoa. What Joy of Noise was that? it tore the Sky.
Micah. They shout and sing to see their dreaded Foe
Now captive, blind, delighting with his Strength.
Manoa. Cou'd my Inheritance but ransom him
Without my Patrimony, having him,
The richest of my Tribe.
Micah. Sons care to nurse
Their Parents in Old Age; but you, your Son.
Manoa. 'My daily Task shall be to guide his Steps,
'And think of those high Deeds by him atchiev'd;
'Combing those Locks which down his Shoulders wave,
'At once our Nation's Strength and Ornament.

AIR *for* Manoa

How willing my Paternal Love
The Weight to share
Of Filial Care,
And part of Sorrow's Burden prove:

Tho' wand'ring in the Shades of Night,
Whilst I have Eyes he wants no Light.

Micah. Your Hopes of his Deliv'ry seem not vain,
In which all *Isr'el*'s Friends participate.
Manoa. I know your friendly Minds, and—

[*A Symphony here of Horror and Confusion*]

Heav'n! what Noise?
Horribly loud, unlike the former Shout.

Chorus of *Philistines* at a Distance

Hear us, our God! O hear our Cry!
Death! Ruin! fall'n! no Help is nigh:
O Mercy, Heav'n! we sink! we die!

Micah. Noise call you this? an universal Groan,
As if the World's Inhabitation perish'd!
Blood, Death, and Ruin at their utmost Point!
Manoa. Ruin indeed! Oh! they have slain my Son!
Micah. Thy Son is rather slaying them; that Cry
From Slaughter of one Foe cou'd not ascend.
Manoa. 'What shall we do? stay here, or run and see?
Micah. 'Keep here, lest into Danger's Mouth we run.
'This gen'ral Cry speaks all *Philistia* fall'n.
'What if his Eye-sight now by Heav'n restor'd,
'Enables him to Vengeance on his Foes?
Manoa. 'That were a Joy presumptuous to be thought.
Micah. 'Things as incredible our God has wrought
'Of old; what hinders now?' —But see, my Friends,
One hither speeds, an *Hebrew* of our Tribe.

SCENE III

MANOA, MICAH, *and an* Israelite *Officer. Chorus of* Israelites.

Officer. Where shall I run, or which way fly the Thoughts
Of this most horrid Sight? O Countrymen!
You're in this sad Event too much concern'd.
Micah. The Accident was loud, we long to know from whence.

Officer. Let me recover Breath; it will burst forth.
Manoa. Tell us the Sum, the Circumstance defer.
Officer. *Gaza* yet stands, but all her Sons are fall'n.
Manoa. Sad! not to us: But now relate by whom.
Officer. By *Samson* done.
Manoa. The Sorrow lessens still,
And nigh converts to Joy.
Officer. Oh *Manoa!*
In vain I wou'd refrain; —the evil Tale
Too soon will rudely pierce thy aged Ear.
Manoa. Suspence in News is Torture; speak them out.
Officer. Then take the worst in brief—*Samson* is dead.
Manoa. The worst indeed! My Hopes to free him hence
Are blasted all; but Death, who sets all free,
Hath paid his Ransom now. 'What windy Joys
'Had I this Day conceiv'd? abortive all!
'Like the fair first-born Bloom of early Spring,
'Nipt with the lagging Rear of Winter's Frost.
Micah. Yet, ere we give the Reins to Grief, say first
How dy'd he? Death to Life is Crown or Shame.
Officer. Unwounded of his Enemies he fell,
At once he did destroy, and was destroy'd.
The Edifice, where all were met to see,
Upon their Heads, and on his own he pull'd.
Manoa. O lastly over-strong against thyself!
A dreadful Way thou took'st to thy Revenge:
Glorious, yet dearly bought!
Micah. 'In Life and Death
'Thou hast fulfill'd the Work for which foretold:
'And now thou ly'st victorious, tho' self-kill'd,
'Triumphant o'er a Heap of slaughter'd Foes,
'More than thy Life had slain. Let *Isr'el* now
'The Voice of Lamentation raise, and sing
'A Hymn of Sorrow to this honour'd Soul.

AIR *for* Micah

Ye Sons of Isr'el *now lament,*
Your Spear is broke, your Bow's unbent;
Your Glory's fled,
Amongst the Dead
Great Samson *lies,*
For ever, ever, clos'd his Eyes.

Chorus of Israelites

Weep, Isr'el, *weep a louder Strain*,
Samson, *your Strength*, *your Hero's slain.*

Manoa. Proceed we hence to find his Body soak'd
In vile *Philistine* Blood, with the pure Stream
And cleansing Herbs wash off the clodded Gore;
Then solemnly attend him to my Tomb,
With silent Obsequies and fun'ral Train.
Micah. The Body comes; we'll meet it on the way
With Laurels ever green, and branching Palm;
Then lay it in its Monument, hung round
With all his Trophies, and great Acts enroll'd
In Verse Heroick, or sweet Lyrick Song.
Manoa. There shall all *Isr'el*'s valiant Youth resort,
And from his Memory inflame their Breasts
To matchless Valour, whilst they sing his Praise.

AIR *for* Manoa

Glorious Hero, may thy Grave
Peace and Honour ever have;
After all thy Pains and Woes,
Rest eternal, sweet Repose.

Israelite Woman. The Virgins too shall on their feastful Days
Visit his Tomb with Flow'rs, and there bewail
His Loss unfortunate in Nuptial Choice.

Chorus of Virgins

Bring the Laurels, bring the Bays,
Strew his Hearse, and strew the Ways.

AIR

May ev'ry Hero fall like thee,
Thro' Sorrow to Felicity.

Chorus repeated

Bring the Laurels, bring the Bays,
Strew his Hearse, and strew the Ways.

Manoa. Come, come; no Time for Lamentation now;
No Cause for Grief; *Samson* like *Samson* fell;
Both Life and Death heroick. To his Foes
Ruin is left; to Him eternal Fame.

Micah. Why should we weep or wail, dispraise or blame,
Where all is well and fair to quiet us?
Praise we *Jehovah* then, who to the End
Not parted from him, but assisted still,
'Till Desolation fill'd *Philistia*'s Lands,
Honour and Freedom giv'n to *Jacob*'s Seed.

GRAND CHORUS*

Let the bright Seraphims in burning Row,
Their loud, up-lifted Angel-Trumpets blow:
Let the Cherubick Host, in tuneful Choirs,
Touch their immortal Harps with golden Wires:
Let their celestial Concerts all unite,
Ever to sound his Praise in endless Blaze of Light.

* Obviously a printer's error: according to the original score the first four lines of this 'Grand Chorus' were to be sung by the 'Israelite Woman' (soprano). The last two lines comprise the final 'Grand Chorus.'

APPENDIX H

Text of Handel's *Occasional Oratorio* as Adapted (in Part) from Milton's Paraphrases of the Psalms by Thomas Morell and Set to Music by George Frideric Handel in 1746 *

PART *the* FIRST

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

Why do the Gentiles tumult,
And the Nations muse a vain Thing,
The Kings of the Earth upstand with Pow'r,
And Princes in their Congregations
Lay deep their Plots throughout each Land,
Against the Lord and his Anointed?

CHORUS

Let us break off by Strength of Hand,
And cast from us, no more to wear
The twisted Cord and iron Band;
Him or his God we scorn to fear.

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

O Lord, how many are my Foes?
How many that in Arms against me rise,

* *A New Occasional Oratorio. As it is Perform'd at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden. The Words taken from Milton, Spenser, &c. And Set to Musick by Mr. Handel* (London, 1746).

That of my Life distrustfully thus say,
No Help for him in God there lies.

Chorus repeated, *Let us break off*, &c.

AIR

Jehovah, *to my Words give Ear,*
My Meditations weigh,
The Voice of my Complaining hear,
To thee alone, my God and King, I pray.

Chorus repeated, *Let us break off*, &c.

RECITATIVE

The Highest, who in Heav'n doth dwell,
Shall laugh them to Scorn:
The Lord shall speak to them in his Wrath,
And in his fell and fierce Ire trouble them:
For I, saith He, have anointed Him my King,
(Tho' ye rebel) on *Sion*'s holy Hill.

AIR

O who shall pour into my swollen Eyes
A Sea of Tears, that never may be dry'd;
A brazen Voice, that may with shrilling Cries
Pierce the dull Heav'ns, and fill the Air so wide;
An iron Frame, that Sighing may endure,
To wail the Misery of the World impure?

AIR

Fly from the threat'ning Vengeance, fly;
Ere it is too late
Avoid your Fate,
The Bolt once thrown, ye surely die:
Put not your Trust
In the Unjust,
Who lift their Heads so high.
Fly from, Da Capo.

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

Humbled with Fear, and awful Reverence,
Before the Footstool of his Majesty,
Throw thyself down with trembling Innocence,
Nor dare to cast thy weak, thy dazzled Eye
On the dread Face of that great Deity,
For fear, lest if he chance to look at thee,
Thou turn to nought, and quite confounded be.

AIR

His Scepter is the Rod of Righteousness,
With which he bruiseth all his Foes to Dust,
And the great Dragon strongly doth repress
Under the Rigor of his Judgment just:
His Seat is Truth, to which the Faithful trust:
From whence proceed her Beams so pure and bright,
That all about him sheddeth glorious Light:
His Scepter is the Rod of Righteousness,
With which he bruiseth all his Foes to Dust.

AIR

Be wise at length, ye Kings averse,
Be taught, ye Judges of the Earth,
With Fear Jehovah *serve.*

CHORUS

Be wise at length, ye Kings averse,
Be taught, ye Judges of the Earth,
With Fear Jehovah *serve: Or brought full low,*
With iron Scepter bruis'd, and then dispers'd,
Scatter'd like Sheep, ye perish in your Way.

RECITATIVE

Of many Millions the populous Rout,
I fear not, tho' incamping round about
They pitch their Tents against me,
My God will rise, my Help is in the Lord.

AIR

Jehovah *is my Shield, my Glory;*
Him thro' my Story
Th' Exalter of my Head I count;
Aloud I cry'd,
He soon reply'd,
And heard me from his holy Mount:
I lay and slept, and wak'd again,
The Lord himself did me sustain.
Jehovah *is my Shield,* &c. Da Capo.

RECITATIVE

Fools or Madmen stand not within thy Sight,
All Workers of Iniquity thou hat'st,
And them, unblest, thou wilt destroy;
The bloody and guileful Man thou dost detest.

CHORUS

God found them guilty, let them fall,
By their own Counsels quell'd,
Push'd them in their Rebellions all,
For against him they had rebell'd.

PART *the* SECOND

AIR

Oh! Liberty, thou choicest Treasure,
Seat of Virtue, Source of Pleasure;
Life without thee knows no Blessing,
No Endearment worth caressing.

RECITATIVE

Who trusts in God shou'd ne'er despair,
The Just are still the Care of Heav'n,
Rejoice, my Soul—*Jehovah* hears.

AIR

Prophetick Visions strike my Eye,
In Vain our Foes for Help shall cry:
War shall cease,
Welcome Peace,
And triumphs after Victory:
The hostile Band,
By his right Hand,
O'erthrown, affrighted leaves the Land.
Prophetick Visions, &c. Da Capo.

CHORUS

May God, from whom all Mercies spring,
Bless the true Church, and save the King!
With firm united Hearts we all
Will conquer in his Cause, or fall.
May God, &c. Da Capo.

RECITATIVE

The Lord hath heard my Pray'r,
Mine Enemies shall all be blank and dash'd
With much Confusion; then grown red with Shame,
They shall return in haste the Way they came,
And in a Moment shall be quite abash'd.

AIR

Then will I Jehovah's *Praise*
According to his Justice raise,
And sing the Name and Deity
Of Jehovah, *the most High:*
Ever let my Thanks endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

CHORUS

All his Mercies shall endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

AIR

How great, and many Perils do enfold
The righteous Man, to make him daily fall,
Were not that heav'nly Grace doth him uphold,
And stedfast Truth acquit him out of all!

DUET

After long Storms and Tempest overblown,
The Sun, at length, his joyful Face doth clear;
Thus after Fortune's Rage is shown,
A blissful Hour at last is known,
Else would afflicted Man despair. Da Capo.

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd*

To God our Strength sing loud and clear,
Sing loud to God our King,
To *Jacob*'s God, that all may hear
Loud Acclamations ring.

AIR

Prepare the Hymn, prepare the Song,
The Timbrel hither bring;
The chearful Psaltry bring along,
And Harp with pleasant String.

CHORUS

Prepare the Hymn, prepare the Song,
The Timbrel hither bring;
The chearful Psaltry bring along,
And Harp with pleasant String.

AIR

He has his Mansion fix'd on high,
Above the Reach of Mortal Eye:
Who by his Wisdom did create
The painted Skies, so full of State,
And did the solid Earth ordain

To rise above the watry Plain:
Who, by his all-commanding Might,
Did fill the new-made World with Light;
Then caus'd the golden tressed Sun,
And the horn'd Moon, their Course to run.

CHORUS

Hallelujah, *your Voices raise,*
Jehovah, *Lord of Hosts, to praise.*
Hallelujah.

PART *the* THIRD

CHORUS

I will sing unto the Lord,
For he hath triumphed gloriously,
The Horse and his Rider hath he thrown into the Sea.

CHORUS

Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the Gods?
Who is like thee, glorious in Holiness,
Fearful in Praises, doing Wonders?
He gave the Egyptians *Storms for Rain.*

CHORUS

He gave them Hailstones for Rain,
Fire mingled with the Hail ran along upon the Ground.

AIR

When warlike Ensigns wave on high,
And Trumpets pierce the vaulted Sky,
The frighted Peasant sees his Field
For Corn an Iron Harvest yield,
No Pasture on the Plain appears,

And rural Joys are chang'd to Tears.
Be calm, and Heav'n will soon dispose
To future Good our present Woes.

RECITATIVE *and* AIR

The Enemy said, I will pursue,
I'll overtake, I will divide the Spoil,
My Lust shall be satisfied upon them.
I will draw my Sword,
My Hand shall destroy them.

AIR

The Sword that's drawn in Virtue's Cause,
To guard our Country, and the Laws,
Friend, Parent, Children dear;
To guide its Edge we Heav'n invoke,
Rebellion falls beneath the Stroke,
And Joy succeeds to Fear.
Millions unborn shall bless the Hand
That gave Deliv'rance to the Land.

CHORUS

Millions unborn shall bless the Hand
That gave Deliv'rance to the Land.

RECITATIVE *and* AIR

When *Israel*, like the bounteous *Nile*,
For *Egypt*'s Lord enrich'd the Soil,
The Streams our gushing Eyes supply'd
Increas'd the River's swelling Tide.

AIR

Tyrants, whom no Cov'nants bind,
Nor solemn Oaths can awe,
Strove t' enslave the free-born Mind,
Religion, Liberty, and Law:

Its own Vicegerent Heav'n ordains
To free the World, and break th' Oppressor's Chains.

Recitative, *and* Air, *and* Chorus

May balmy Peace, and wreath'd Renown,
The virtuous Hero ever crown!
May Bliss eternal be his Share,
Whose God and People are his Care!

ANTHEM

Blessed are all they that fear the Lord.
God save the King!
Long live the King!
May the King live for ever! Hallelujah, Amen.

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